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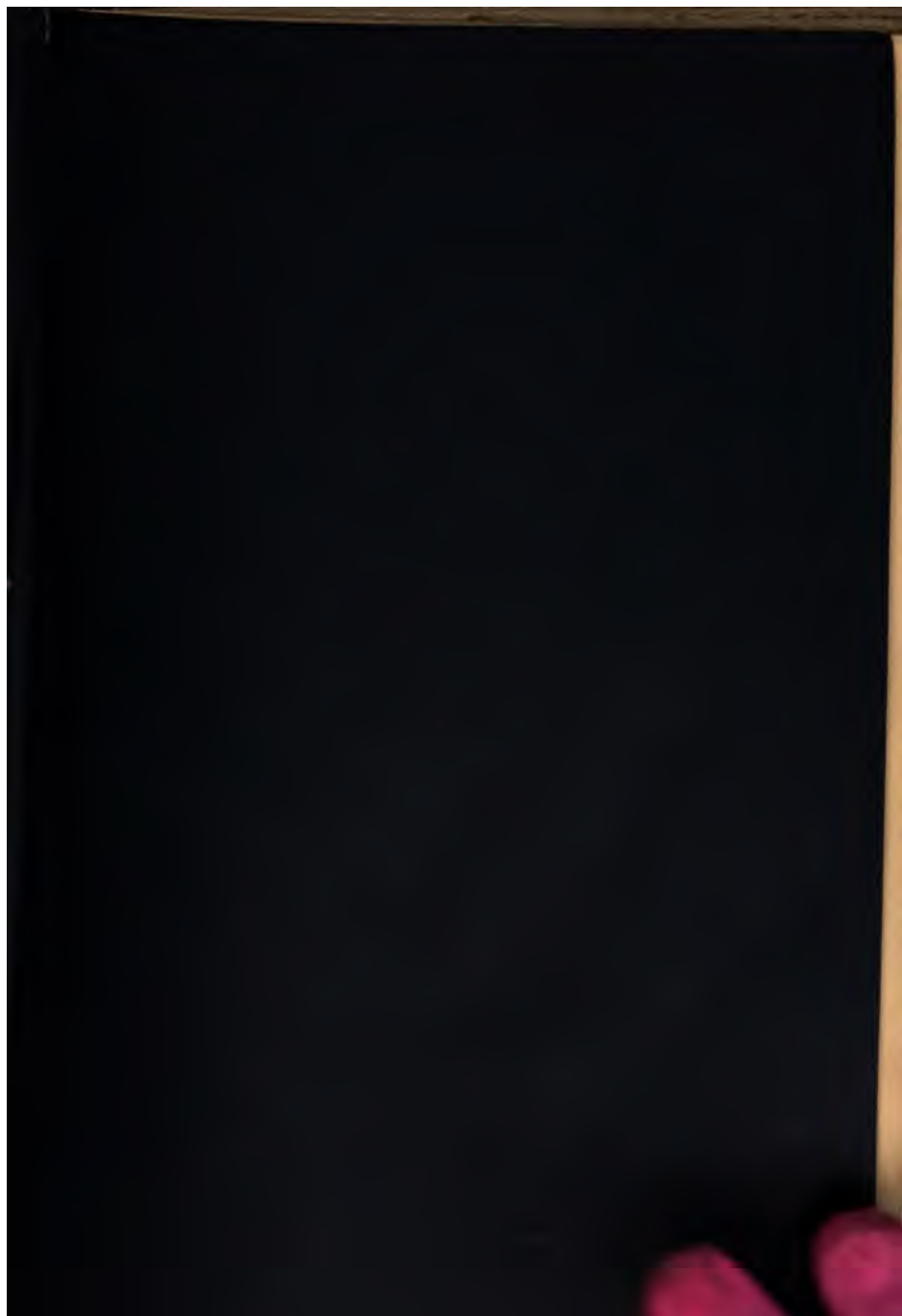


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ANNALS OF ENGLISH PRESBYTERY.

PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND COMPANY
EDINBURGH AND LONDON

ANNALS
OF
ENGLISH PRESBYTERY.

From the Earliest Period to the Present Time.

BY

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LONDON:
JAMES NISBET & CO., 21 BERNERS STREET.

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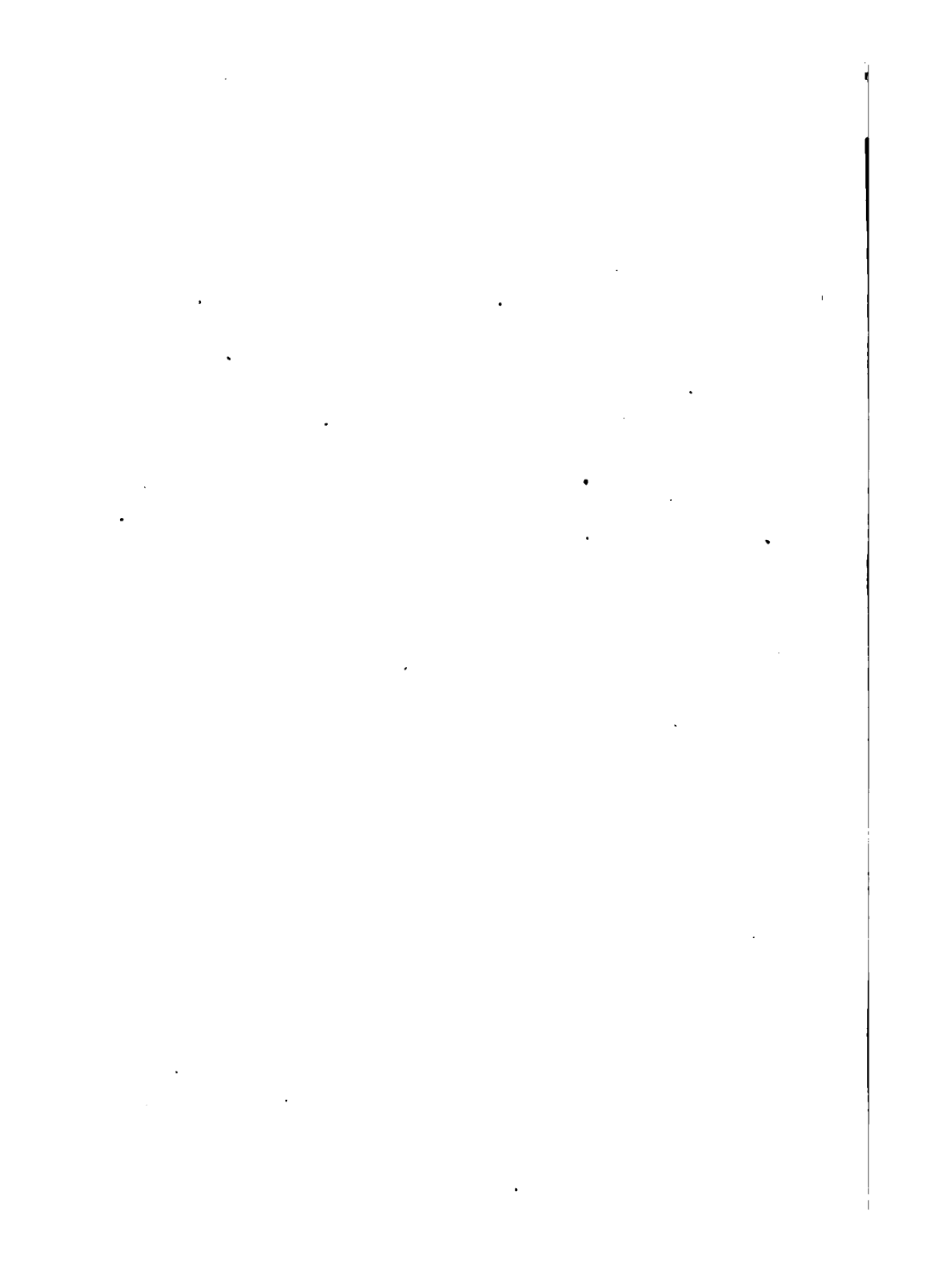
NOTICE
OF
RECALL

TO THE
REVEREND THE MODERATOR AND MINISTERS,
WITH THE
ELDERS, DEACONS, AND MEMBERS
OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN ENGLAND,

This Volume is inscribed,

WITH SINCERE GRATITUDE AND RESPECT, BY

THE AUTHOR.





PREFACE.



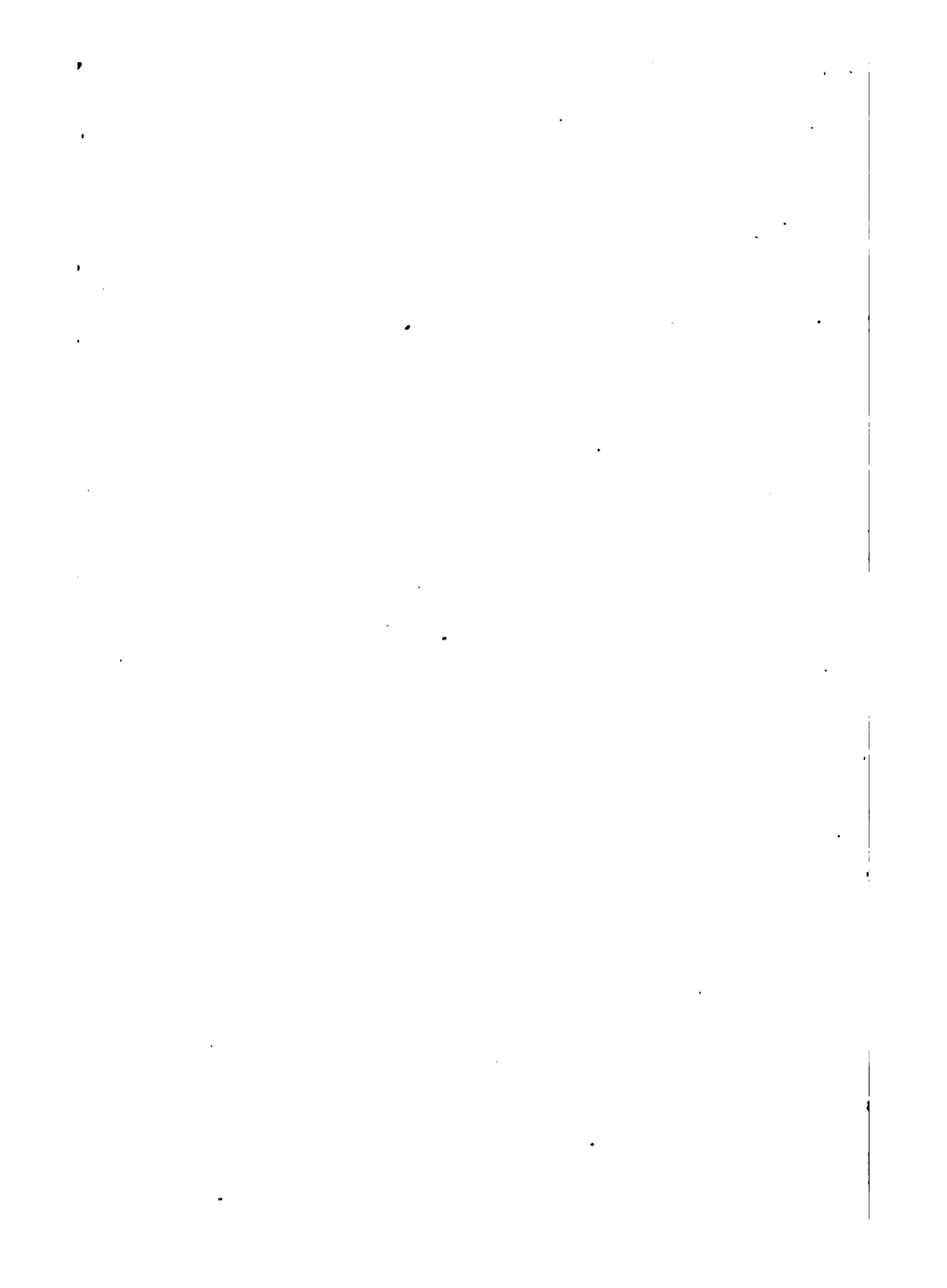
IN these Annals the term "presbytery" has been used in a popular rather than in an ecclesiastical sense. It is not the author's object to vindicate "presbyterianism" as a form of church-government, in distinction from episcopacy or independency. He prefers, therefore, the term "presbytery," in order to embrace all who have distinguished themselves by their adherence to primitive christianity and to the principles of the Reformation in England, including the saints, bishops, and martyrs of the olden time, without meaning to assert that they were all, in the modern sense, presbyterians. It must be admitted that Presbytery has a history of its own, and it may be distinctly traced in its progress through the various

epochs of the church. But it is in the line of identity with the great doctrines of the gospel that the author would trace the succession of the true church of Christ. And, while entertaining his own convictions as to the primitive order of the church, he trusts that, in narrating its struggles with other forms of church-polity, age and experience have taught him to treat with becoming respect all parties who, though differing from him in lesser points, are united to that living Centre from which all the beams of gospel truth radiate, and towards which they all converge.

In regard to the form which these Annals have assumed, the author is anxious to disclaim the idea of furnishing a complete or connected history. His materials are chiefly drawn from lectures delivered at various periods and on various occasions. This may account for their popular character, and for their consisting mainly of biographical sketches and illustrations. At the same time, he flatters himself that, in the statement of facts, his narrative will be found strictly impartial and well authenticated. He feels deeply sensible that, amidst such a mass of materials

as those presented in the wide field of history he has ventured to embrace, he has omitted many names worthy of commemoration, and passed lightly over many a scene admitting much deeper research than his space would allow; and for these omissions, and too brief allusions, he can only plead that, having limited himself to a mere compend, he has selected those characters and incidents in which, from previous acquaintance, he felt more specially interested.

EDINBURGH, *April* 1872.



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CHAPTER I.

ENGLISH PRESBYTERY IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

A.D. 286-1000.

“ Early, early, on our mountains,
 Presage of a glorious day,
Pure, as from its native fountains,
Faintly broke the gospel ray.
Storm and cloud the pathway covers
By our rude forefathers trod ;
Yet that dawning brightness hovers
Where St Columb walked with God !
Ever broadening, ever welling
From Iona's holy home,
Poured the radiance, sin-dispelling,
Till it met the fogs of Rome :
Dark eclipse the earth then shrouded,
Lurid phantasms filled the air ;
But the glorious sun, though clouded,
Shorn and beamless—*still was there!*”

“ *Lays of the Kirk and Covenant,*”

By MRS A. STUART MENTREATH.

CHAPTER I.

A. D. 286—1000.

English Presbytery in the Primitive Church—The British Church—The Celtic Church—St Patrick and St Columba—The British in conflict with the Roman Church under Augustine—St Aidan of Northumbria.

FEW periods of our history are more obscure than that of the introduction of Christianity into Britain. Except to the archæologist or to the church-polemic, it offers no features of attraction; although, when duly explored, the field may be found, like our native moors, to conceal very valuable materials. In the absence of reliable history, the confusion is too often worse confounded by our monkish annalists, who, borrowing from myths and legends, in their love of the marvellous, mix up truth with the most absurd and incredible fiction. That the seeds of christian truth must have been conveyed at a very early period to the shores of England is very plain; but when or by whom these were conveyed, must be left to conjecture. The theory that would ascribe to St Paul the honour of being the pioneer of the gospel in Britain, though the most plausible, rests on no better

historical grounds than the traditions which would assign it to Joseph of Arimathea, or to Pudens and Claudia mentioned in the Pauline epistle. The story of king Lucius, who is said to have set up bishops and archbishops in place of the old Roman flamens and archflamens, is now generally abandoned as apocryphal.*

We may fairly conclude that the knowledge of the christian religion had reached England before the close of the second century; that it came, not from the Roman but the Eastern church, and probably through the medium of the disciples of St John; and that the British church sprung not from a Latin, but from a Celtic origin. This hypothesis is adopted by many of our best historical authorities, and among the rest by Neander. After setting aside the legend of Lucius, he proceeds to say, "The peculiarity of the later British church is evidence against its origin from Rome; for in many ritual matters it departed from the usage of the Romish church, and agreed much more nearly with the churches of Asia Minor. It withstood for a long time the authority of the Romish papacy. This circumstance would seem to indicate that the Britons had received their christianity, either immediately,

* Usher, Brit. Eocl. Antiq., cap. v. ; Godwin's "Discourse of the Conversion of the Britons," p. 27. See the arguments for the story of Lucius ably summed up and disposed of in a late scholarly tractate, by the Rev. W. L. Alexander, D.D., on "The Ancient British Church," chap. v. p. 84.

or through Gaul, from Asia Minor—a thing quite possible and easy, by means of the commercial intercourse. The later Anglo-Saxons, who opposed the spirit of ecclesiastical independence among the Britons, and endeavoured to establish the church supremacy of Rome, were uniformly inclined to trace back the church establishments to a Roman origin; from which effort many false legends might have arisen.”*

A few glimpses of the ancient British church shine feebly through the haze of legendary story; and, as usual, its first pages are marked by the blood of martyrdom. Of these early martyrs, the names of four have been preserved—Alban, a native of Verulam; Amphibalus, who suffered at Redburn, near St Albans; and Aaron and Julius, natives of Caerleon, on the Usk, in Monmouthshire. The historian Bede's account of the first-mentioned of these confessors bears every mark of truth. The young Alban, when yet a pagan, shelters and conceals a christian pastor who fled from his bloodthirsty pursuers. In return for this act of charity, he is converted through the stranger to the christian faith; and thereafter, on the approach of the soldiers in search of their victim, Alban saves the life of his teacher by exchanging garments with him. Dragged before the druidical priests, whom he found offering up sacrifice to their gods, he boldly confesses himself a christian. In-

* Neander, Gen. Church Hist., vol. i. p. 117.

censed at missing the object of his search, the judge orders him to be scourged, and commands him to join in the pagan sacrifice; but Alban steadfastly refuses, and, protesting against such idolatry, is sentenced to be beheaded. This martyrdom took place in the year of our Lord 286.

The blood of the martyrs proved in this, as in many other cases, to be the seed of the church. Some years later, we have evidence of the formation of a christian church, in the fact of three British bishops having attended the Council of Arles, summoned by Constantine in the year 314—namely, Eboreus from the city of York, Restitutus from the city of London, and Adelfius from Caerleon, the latter being accompanied by a deacon. What kind of bishops these were, and how they were deputed to this council, does not appear, and may be variously conjectured. As no mention is made of a presbyter among them, some might conclude that in the British, as in the Philippian church, the only distinction then known was that of “the bishops and the deacons.” Certain it is that at this period the power of the pope was unknown; that the council governed by the “common consent” of its members; and that one of its canons enacts that “no person is to ordain bishops *alone*, but always with the concurrence of seven other bishops, or, where that is impossible, of not fewer than three”—a rule less in accordance, it must be owned, with prelatial than it is with presbyterial usage, which requires the

presence of three of its bishops, at least, as essential to the validity of its ordinations.

On the extent of the jurisdiction claimed by these ancient British bishops we are wholly without the means of judging. It can only be inferred that there was only one bishop in a city at that early period, with whom no other was to interfere. If we may judge from what is reported of those British bishops who appeared at Sardica, and who were indebted for their maintenance while they tarried there to the public exchequer, they must have been very poor; though, as Sulpitius Severus maintains, they did not merit on that account the taunts of the wealthier ecclesiastics, already aping the rank and splendour of the Roman empire. Fancy is apt to beguile us with names, and we are in some danger of transferring to the rude, thinly-peopled, semi-barbarous state of Britain at that period, ideas suggested by the high-sounding titles and dignities of modern days. History brings us back to the sober truth, that it was long before British bishops grew up into the pomp and pretensions of prelacy, as it was long before the lowly chapels in which they officiated, and which were then constructed of clay and wattles, grew up into cathedrals.

With regret it must be owned that, among all the ecclesiastics of the ancient Britons, the only name which has descended to posterity is associated with heresy—that of Pelagius, the well-known opponent of St Augustine, bishop of Hippo. There is too strong

evidence for believing that he was a Briton and a Welsh monk.* Pelagius appears to have been a good man, of amiable disposition, and a diligent if not devout student of Scripture. But he was misled, partly by a reaction from the antinomian spirit of the age, and partly by an overweening love to metaphysics, into a denial of the original corruption of man's nature, and into assertions of the powers of the human will, which seemed to set aside the necessity of supernatural conversion. In his controversy with the advocates of orthodoxy, Pelagius was ably supported by Celestius, another native probably of Britain, but practising as an advocate at Rome. These heresiarchs do not seem to have returned to their native country, but their sentiments unhappily found their way into Britain, and their proselytes became so numerous as to alarm the simple and ill-educated native teachers, who, finding themselves unable to deal with their subtle antagonists, applied for help to the bishops of Gaul; and these, having called a council, despatched two of their number, Germanus of Auxerre, and Lupus of Troyes, both men of great reputation, to uphold the orthodox cause in Britain. These good men prevailed by their preaching, not in churches only, but in the streets and fields, in turning the tide in favour of evangelical doctrine. In a con-

* The Welsh claim him under the name of Morgan, which signifies Sea-born, and which he seems afterwards to have changed into its Greek equivalent, Pelagius.

ference subsequently held at St Albans, they were met by the champions of Pelagianism, who appeared in splendid apparel and equipage borrowed from Italy ; but the Gallic divines, though plainly clad, succeeded in gaining the victory. In a few years, the chief supporters of the new doctrine were banished, and Pelagianism no longer found a place in the British church.

Years pass on, and we hear little more of the British church till the close of the sixth century. Meanwhile, the Britons, subjugated by the Saxons, whom they had invited over to help them, are driven into the mountains of Wales. During this time also, in the year 430, Celestine, the Roman pontiff, has despatched Palladius, a Roman monk, on a mission to Ireland, "to the Scots," as they were then called, "who believe in Christ." His mission proves unsuccessful. But long before his advent, or that of Augustine, the Roman monk sent to convert the Saxons, christianity had already become known, and loved, and practised in Ireland and Scotland. In point of fact, before the Saxons or any German tribes were heard of or appeared on the stage of our history, Europe was mainly peopled by the Celtic race ; though at the commencement of the christian era they existed as distinct nationalities only in Ireland, in Scotland, and in Britain. The inhabitants of these three countries were of the same race, spoke essentially the same language, and held mutual intercourse. Their religion, too, partook of

the same Celtic development, as appears in its freedom from Romanic elements down to the seventh century. To form a true idea, therefore, of the early British church, it becomes necessary to advert to the Celtic church, of which St Patrick and St Columba were the leading ornaments.

The history of St Patrick is wrapt in mystery. Doubts have even been thrown on the existence of such a person. He has been confounded with a senior Patrick, and even with Palladius. But without entering into such discussions, and assuming that he is the person known by the "Confession of St Patrick," which has been preserved, we learn that he was a native of Britain, and that his father was a deacon named Calpurnius, who again was the son of a presbyter. "Here," as a late competent judge observes, "we have a succession of three generations holding office in the Scottish church previous to the years from 372 to 376, when Patrick is said to have been born; although, if he commenced his mission in 432, the real period of his birth was more likely about 400. But speaking generally, these three generations of christian office-bearers existed in the Scottish church during the fourth century, or nearly a century before the mission of Palladius."* Here also is proof that, at this early period, the celibacy of the clergy was unknown. From the same "Confession" we

* "The Early Scottish Church," by the Rev. Thomas Maclauchlan, D.D., p. 95.

learn that Patrick, when in the sixteenth year of his age, was carried off by pirates to Ireland, where he remained for six years in a state of servitude. The solitude of woods and mountains encouraged a naturally serious and meditative spirit, and he piously says, "The Lord opened my unbelieving heart to a tardy remembrance of my transgressions, and to turn with my whole soul unto the Lord my God, who regarded my low estate, and pitied the ignorance of my youth." Relieved from captivity, he appears to have visited France, and there been ordained to the office of a presbyter; after which, along with some companions, he returned to Ireland, burning with a holy zeal for the conversion of the natives, whom he had left in a state of the grossest ignorance and barbarism. There is not the slightest historical foundation for supposing that he ever visited Rome, or that he had any commission from the pope. From the most authentic accounts, he must have obtained his religious education and his orders from a Gallic or Celtic origin. The simple and warm-hearted presbyter met with a success in his missionary labours far more wonderful than all the ridiculous miracles that have been ascribed to him in legendary tales. He is said to have ordained no fewer than four hundred bishops or christian teachers. He had found the country a moral desert, and he died in 465, leaving it filled with churches and monasteries. His Celtic converts, being kept far aloof from

Romish influences by distance, lineage, and language, retained for many ages the simple rites and scriptural faith in which they had been instructed ; and, unlike the great body of our modern Irish, would have doubtless held it foul scorn to trace their religion to a Latin or an Anglo-Saxon pedigree.

Strangely enough, the dimness of these old annals begins to disperse when we turn to the north of Scotland, and come in sight of St Columba. This genuine saint was born, about the year 520, in Ireland, in the county of Donegal. His father was related by blood with the royal family of Ireland. His name was originally Crimthan, but was afterwards changed to Columba, or Columkill, "the dove of the cell, or church." If, in early life, he was addicted to war and feuds, the change of his name may indicate the entire transformation that must have passed over his nature ; for in after life few had more of the gentle peacefulness of the dove. In personal appearance, Columba is said to have excelled in manly beauty and majestic stature ; to have possessed a sweet and sonorous voice, with a cordial manner, and grave dignity of deportment. Impressed in early youth with a deep sense of religion, he renounced all his worldly prospects, as descended from a royal stock, and all his possessions, and devoting himself to the cause of Christ, he set sail in a *curach*, or a boat made of wickers and covered with hides, accompanied by twelve friends, for the

coast of Scotland. The circumstances which preceded and led to this mission are imperfectly recorded; we only know that, in the forty-second year of his age, in the year 563, he arrived on the Scottish shore, and received from the Pictish king a gift of the island of Iona. Surrounded by a stormy sea, sullen and sad in its flat monotony, and wanting even the grandeur of rocks and the grace of vegetation belonging to other northern islands, a more desolate abode could hardly be imagined; and were it not for the ruins of the monastery that remain to mark the spot, with the sepulchres of Norse kings lying around it, bleached with the storms of thirteen centuries, the traveller could never have guessed it to have been the cradle of our infant christianity. There, however, did the saintly Columba reside for above thirty years; there did he gather around him a goodly company of disciples, whom he trained in arts and letters, as well as the sacred learning of the Scriptures; there, by night as well as by day, did these crumbling walls echo to the sound of prayers, psalms, and anthems; there did the rude natives acquire the arts of husbandry, and princes resort from distant lands in pilgrimage; there did the presbyter-abbot ordain missionaries and bishops to go into all parts of the world; and there, on Saturday, the 9th of June 597, he died, having that morning declared,—“This day is called in Scripture the Sabbath; and such will it prove to me, for it will end all my labours.”

Many are the anecdotes that have been recorded of this truly apostolic man, and all of them are descriptive of virtues apparently opposite, but which, blending in him, produced a character of singular goodness: deeply pious, yet gay and cheerful; a stern reprover of vice, yet blessing the milkmaid as she passed, and even the milk she carried; abounding in acts of kindness to all within his reach, and drawing towards him the affection and veneration of all—from the rude chieftains whose quarrels he settled, down to his own dear children, as he called his disciples, down even to the old white horse of the monastery, which approached him as he lay on his death-bed, and which he would not suffer to be driven away till the faithful creature had received its last caress from the hand of its master. It would be a great mistake to suppose that the institution at Iona resembled a Romish convent. It was rather a large christian family, or school of the prophets. Though the members of the fraternity divided their time into certain portions, allotted to prayer, vigils, fasting, reading, transcribing, and manual labour, they had no monastic vows of poverty, celibacy, or obedience. Columba did not recommend lengthened fasts, any more than long faces, but would have the brethren to “eat every day, that they might be able to work and pray every day.” Under his superintendence the barren island was converted into a fruitful field, and a smiling orchard. Every hand was busy at work, every

hour profitably spent. There was nothing morbid in his asceticism, no treating of the body as if it were in itself an evil, no merit or importance attached to bodily maceration. On the contrary, to preserve a healthy frame as the best vehicle of a sound mind, seems to have been his perpetual study; "and whilst all his biographers conspire to attest the uniform hilarity that beamed upon his countenance, one of them tells us that from the grace of his person, the neatness of his dress, and the ruddiness of his cheeks, he always looked like a man nourished amid delicacies."*

Being a collegiate establishment, intended to train men for the work of the ministry, the monastery of Iona does not seem to have admitted females; but that no vow of celibacy was imposed, is apparent from the undeniable fact, that many of those who issued from its walls entered the married state. Equally mistaken would be the conclusion, that because Columba was a presbyter, the discipline of his house would resemble that of a church constituted after the presbyterian model. This would be to forget that the brethren at Iona were not ministers of an organised church, but missionaries, whose object was to preach the gospel and to plant the church in an almost pagan land. On the other hand, those who are bent on making out an uninterrupted chain of prelatial orders, are greatly at a loss how to explain the un-

* "Iona," by the Rev. W. Lindsay Alexander, D.D., p. 78, 79.

doubted fact that Columba, himself a presbyter, or perhaps only a deacon, ordained and presided over whole provinces of bishops.*

Great stress has been laid on a person called a bishop having come to Iona in disguise, who, on being recognised by Columba, was shown much respect. The incident only proves how seldom bishops of any kind were seen about Iona. But we are extremely apt to err by investing ecclesiastical names with senses which they only came to bear in a later age. If one thing appears more certain than another from these early records, it is that the term "bishop" then implied neither a diocesan, nor one possessing the exclusive power of ordination or of jurisdiction over presbyters. It is of more importance to mark the doctrine taught at Iona. And here it is not so much from positive information that we ascertain the creed of these primitive christians, as from the total absence of those corrupt innovations and superstitions which were now gradually creeping into the church of Rome. In the life of St Columba, penned by his faithful follower, Adamnan, there is

* It does not appear that he received any other ordination than that of a deacon; though, as Bede, writing long after, speaks of him as a presbyter and monk, it is possible he may have received, during his travels abroad, some formal ordination to the pastoral office. Bede says of his successor: "Under his jurisdiction, the whole province, including even the bishops, by an unwonted order, were subjected, after the example of the first teacher, Columba, who was not a bishop, but a presbyter and a monk,"—*qui non episcopus, sed presbyter castitit et monachus.*—Bede, lib. iii. c. 4.

not the slightest reference to the worship of the Virgin Mary—no mention of “the mother of God”—no evidence of saint or image worship—no reference to purgatory—not even a vestige of a liturgy or of forms of prayer. One expression, that of *missa*, used by one of his biographers, has been supposed to indicate a belief in the mass, or the corporal presence in the eucharist; but this may be easily explained, without admitting what would be inconsistent with all history, that they held a dogma long contested, and not introduced till the ninth, nor established till the thirteenth century.*

Upon the strength of a few words said to have fallen, in the warmth of his heart, from the old man when dying, that he would not cease to pray for his brethren after his departure, they have been charged with holding the doctrine of the invocation of saints, which it cost Rome whole ages after him to

* From the statements above made, drawn from Adamnan's “Life of Columba,” the reader may judge for himself what amount of credibility is due to the following extraordinary averment regarding the rule of Iona:—“Authorities, *unquestionable* and *unquestioned*, demonstrate the existence of auricular confession, the invocation of saints, the universal faith in their protection and intervention in temporal affairs, the celebration of the mass, the real presence in the eucharist, ecclesiastical celibacy, fasts and abstinences, prayer for the dead, the sign of the cross, and, above all, the assiduous and profound study of the Holy Scriptures.” (“St Columba, apostle of Caledonia,” by the Count de Montalembert, p. 146, 1863.) We need go no further than Dr Jamieson's “Culdees,” and to the learned and elaborate work of Dr Maclauchlan, on “The Early Scottish Church” (chap. xiii. xiv.), where the “authorities unquestionable and unquestioned” are given to prove the *very reverse* of every portion of the above sentence except the last clause.

bring to perfection.* But one thing is acknowledged on all hands, that their main business consisted in the reverential study of the Scripture, in order to qualify them to be what Columba chiefly aimed at, preachers of "God's word;" and that the mode which he laid down for himself and his disciples, was by "proofs adduced from Holy Scripture"† as the only authoritative rule of faith. Their time, indeed, seems to have been chiefly devoted to the transcription of the Bible; and as the only language in which they could communicate with the natives was that of the ancient Gael, we see no reason forbidding the conjecture, even in the absence of manuscripts, that they may have translated into that tongue the words of truth which they imparted by oral instruction.

The Culdees, as the disciples of Columba were called, though bound by no rule, like that of St Benedict, continued for centuries after his death to inherit his life and spirit, and to maintain a pure gospel in the communities which they gathered around them both at home and abroad. It is only of late that traces of their labours have been discovered on the continent of Europe, where few expected to find

* "Though these words indicate a belief on the part of Columba that the blessed in heaven may intercede for those that they have left on earth, they furnish no evidence whatever that praying to the departed for such intercession was either known or maintained by him."—"Iona," by Dr W. L. Alexander, p. 96.

† "Prolatis sacre Scripturæ testimoniis."

them.* In regard to ordination, indeed, the Romish church held them to be very uncanonical. "Kenti-gern of Glasgow was ordained," says his biographer, "after the ancient manner of the Britons and Scots, merely by anointing his head, with invocation of the Holy Spirit, the benediction, and the imposition of hands; for these islanders, living apart from the rest of the christian world, were ignorant of the canons." † "When the apostolic see sent us to Britain," says Laurentius, the successor of Augustine, "we held both the Britons and the Scots, before we knew them, in great esteem for their sanctity, supposing that they lived according to the customs of the church (of Rome); but after we became acquainted with them, we found the Scots no better than the Britons; for one of their bishops, Daganus, on coming to us, not only refused to communicate with us, but would not eat his victuals under the same roof in which we were entertained." ‡

The following facts may perhaps account for the unceremonious conduct of the old Scottish bishop:—

* We refer to the recent researches of Professor Ebrard, of Erlangen, into the history of the Culdean church of the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries in France, Germany, and Italy; proving them to have been the pioneers of evangelical truth, especially in Germany. See an interesting paper on "The Continental Missions of the Early Celtic Church," by Professor Lorimer, D.D., in the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, April 1871.

† John of Tinmouth refers here to the "Apostolical Canons," a forgery of the third century.

‡ Milner calls this "bigotry;" and Lingard sagely suggests that it was "because they observed the Roman Easter!"

“In former times,” says John Major, “the Scots were instructed in the faith by priests and monks, without bishops.”* “Priests were chosen by the suffrages of the people, from the monks and Culdees,” says Hector Boece. “The Scots,” says John Bale, “had their bishops and ministers chosen by the vote of the people, *as they had seen it practised among the Britons, after the manner of the Asiatics.* But these things did not please the Romans, they being more addicted to ceremony, and having a dislike to the Asiatics.”† In fine, the Culdees, as they maintained their independence of Rome down to the eleventh century, may be said to have handed down the torch of truth to the Waldensians, the Bohemians, and Hussites of the Continent, and to the Lollards of the British isles, thus presenting a continuous stream of living light, till it burst into flame at the reformation. In the labours of those primitive missionaries, we see the true apostolic succession—not that of dying men, but that of the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever; and that of the true Church, built, not on the persons of the apostles and prophets, but on the

* “Prioribus illis temporibus, per sacerdotes et monachos, sine episcopis, Scotos in fide institutos fuisse.”

† “Sed hæc Romanis, ut magis ceremoniosis, atque Asianorum osoribus, non placebant.” “There is not a line in existence of any author deserving of credit, to show that the ordinary members of the societies, at Iona or elsewhere, were set apart by episcopal ordination. St Patrick was a presbyter, so was St Columba; and they could not confer the orders which they did not possess—that is, the orders of a bishop in the modern sense of the term.”—“Early Scottish Church,” by Dr Maclauchlan, p. 426.

only foundation which they laid—"Jesus Christ, the chief corner-stone."

"Peace to their shades! the pure Culdees
Were Albyn's earliest priests of God,
Ere yet an island of her seas
By foot of Saxon monk was trod."*

From this brief retrospect, we now turn to that branch of the ancient Celtic church which, as we have said, was driven by the Saxons into Wales, and which is known as the British church. In the year 597, the very year in which Columba expired in his humble cell at Iona, Gregory of Rome, afterwards called pope Gregory the Great, having seen some Anglo-Saxons exposed for sale in the market-place, was so struck with the beauty of the blue-eyed and bright-haired youths,—whom he pronounced to be not *Angli*, Angles, but *angeli*, angels,—that he formed a project for converting their pagan countrymen to the true faith. After reaching the pontifical chair, he entrusted the mission to a Roman monk, called Augustine, who, with forty companions, landed at Thanet in Kent. Announcing themselves as an embassy sent from Rome to offer to the natives the everlasting bliss of Heaven, they met the Saxon king in a style suited to impress the rude natives at once with the dignity and the sanctity of their mission. They bore aloft a silver crucifix, and a banner on which was painted a figure of the Saviour. The

* Campbell's "Reullura."

solemn procession was accompanied by the chanting of psalms and litanies. The sombre aspect of the strangers,—their mystical vigils and rites,—above all, the rumour of wondrous miracles ascribed to Augustine, and by him at least not openly disavowed, were all fitted to produce a powerful impression on these simple-minded pagans. The king, with multitudes of his subjects, submitted to Christian baptism; and Augustine was rewarded by the pope conferring upon him the title of archbishop of the newly-planted church. Hitherto the pontiff seems to have been unaware of the existence of the old British church; he conceived that Christianity was wholly unknown in the island; whereas it had flourished among the native Britons for more than a century. Augustine, having heard of a large body of these Christians who lived apart from the heathen around them in Wales, invited some of their leading men to a conference. The meeting was held under the shadow of an oak near the Severn. Seven of their bishops or teachers, headed by one Dinooth, the abbot of Bangor, accepted the invitation. On their way to the place of meeting, they are said to have taken counsel of an anchorite, highly esteemed for wisdom and piety. “True christianity,” said the aged counsellor, “is a religion of humility. Its divine author said, ‘Come unto me, for I am meek and lowly.’ Therefore if this Augustine, on your approach, rises from his seat to receive you, regard him as a heaven-sent messenger; if not,

despise him." As they drew near, the papal legate, proud of his newly-acquired dignity, and not unwilling to display it in the presence of the Romish dignitaries around him, and before the plain Celtic bishops, kept his seat in solemn state. In the conference which followed, Augustine earnestly requested the co-operation of the British bishops in his enterprise of converting the Saxons; but there were two conditions on which alone he would accept their aid. The first of these was, that they must conform in all points with the customs and canons of the Romish church, especially in regard to the clerical tonsure, and the time of celebrating Easter; and the second was, that they should yield unqualified submission to the Romish see, and accept of him as their archbishop. To these proposals the abbot of Bangor, who is described by Bede as having been "wonderfully learned in the liberal arts," made reply in the name of the rest, showing, "by a variety of argumentations," that they would neither change their customs nor acknowledge Augustine as their archbishop. "They would be obedient," he said, "to the church of God, to the pope of Rome, and to every godly christian—to love every man in his degree—to help them, in word and deed, to be the children of God; but other obedience than this they knew not to be due to him whom he called pope, and the father of fathers." Augustine lost temper, and after rebuking them, it is said, though we think apocryphally, that he offered to

work a miracle in their presence on a blind man, in proof of his divine mission—a challenge which the Britons declined.*

A second conference was appointed, at which the seven bishops were accompanied by a larger number of their brethren. The dispute was renewed with no better success; the British ecclesiastics would neither change their customs, nor submit to Augustine's authority as the papal representative. At the close, the prelate, incensed at their obstinacy, denounced against them the speedy vengeance of Heaven—a prediction which, in the opinion of some, helped to bring about its own fulfilment, and which others regard as an inspired prophecy, followed with a just retribution on those who would not join him in his sacred mission. Be this as it may, within a few years after the death of Augustine, a bloody victory was gained over the Britons by Ethelred, prince of Northumbria, followed by the slaughter of twelve hundred of the monks of Bangor.†

From the meagre accounts we have received of this

* Dr Hook treats the whole story of Augustine's proposed miracle as "a Canterbury tale." He has adduced strong proofs that the passage in Bede, referring to it, must be regarded as an interpolation.—Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury, vol. i. ch. ii. pp. 68-70.

† Fuller, after weighing all the evidence *pro* and *con* as to the share of Augustine in this catastrophe, brings in a verdict of *ignoramus* (Church Hist. i. sect. ii.) Dr Hook feels naturally indignant at the charge, and naturally also shows little sympathy for the 1200 monks—whom he calls "some monks of Bangor." He tells us that "Augustine despised his opponents, and regarded them as barbarians, more barbarous than the Saxons." Where he finds his authority for this

interesting conference, it is apparent that various differences between the two parties came under discussion, besides mere disputes about the tonsure and the celebration of Easter—points only proving that the British church, like its Celtic sister at Iona, had derived its traditions from an Asiatic, and not from a Latin origin. Bede asserts that the British “held *many other things* contrary to ecclesiastical unity.”* The fact is, that not a single British bishop could be induced to join Augustine. How is this to be explained? It would be absurd to ascribe it to the lack of a missionary spirit. The ancient Celtic church, to which they belonged, was distinguished for nothing so much as its zeal in propagating the gospel; and to the migratory habits, or rather apostolic zeal of these monks, in the south as well as the north, we owe the first settlement of the Christian faith in our island. It may be granted that towards the Saxons, the ruthless invaders of their country, whose conquests over their churches and homes might be traced in blood and ruin, they certainly cherished a natural antipathy. But their aversion to join in this new crusade must be traced to other sources. The main cause, no doubt, which led to the breaking up of their interview with

opinion we know not; but Lingard informs us that, “in the estimation of the Britons, the Saxons were an accursed race—children of robbers and murderers.”—Lingard, *Hist. of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, vol. i. p. 61.

* *Alia plurima*, are Bede’s words; and Augustine complains that “in many things indeed,” *multis quidem*, they differed from Rome.—*Bed. Hist. Eccl. lib. ii. c. 2.*

Augustine, and their refusal to co-operate with him, was their inflexible resolve not to submit to the authority of the Romish church. Besides, their notions of conversion differed materially from those of Augustine. With them, it implied the instruction of the natives in the knowledge of Holy Scripture; with him it was identified with the rite of baptism, and submission to the pope. They aimed at the conversion of men to christianity; he aimed at the conversion of England to catholicism: and in this object, doubtless, Augustine succeeded, for he and his successors handed over the country into that baptized heathenism, from which it only recovered at the reformation.

It becomes, therefore, an interesting question to ascertain the character of the church which these British bishops represented. It is hardly worth while to dispute the title of these deputies to the ecclesiastical status of diocesan bishops. Bede calls them "seven bishops *or* teachers" (*septem episcopos sive doctores*), obviously unable to draw any distinction between the two offices among the Britons.* Their principal speaker was an abbot, and the other six were, no doubt, plain ministers of the word, occupying perhaps the chief towns in Wales, and

* Ussher changes it into "bishops *and* teachers," which would alter the case. Dr Hook, with all his contempt for the poor monks, elevates them to episcopal thrones, and assigns each of the seven his diocese,—viz., "Menevia or St Davida, Llandaff, Llanbadarn, Bangor, St Asaphs, Gloucester, and Cornwall."—*Lives of the Archbishops*, vol. i. p. 71.

distinguished from the rest of their brethren mainly by their superior piety or learning. The idea of assigning to these simple men, living in such a rude age and country, sees and dignities, was plainly an afterthought of later times. Dioceses, presbyteries, and parishes, were then alike unknown. If any church rule existed among these Celtic christians, it must have been like that of the Culdees, conventual or collegiate. But under whatever name or form they may have been governed, a more instructive contrast can hardly be imagined than that presented by the grasping ambition of the Romish hierarchy, who seized upon Canterbury, York, and other high places of the land as the seats of their sovereignty, and the simplicity and lowliness which marked these primitive heralds of the cross, who plied their vocation chiefly in bleak islands or desolate mountains. In process of time, over the moss-grown cells in which they worshipped churches were erected, which have since been consecrated into cathedrals. If a notable conversion was effected,—if the preacher had, or believed he had, some visible token of encouragement from Heaven,—a chapel was the fitting memorial of the event; or when a saintly pastor died, his grateful flock dedicated a church to his memory. It was built, small and rude perhaps, of wattles, or such materials as could be readily procured.* And

* "Sketches of Early Scottish History and Social Progress," by Cosmo Innes, Esq., p. 3. 1860.

such must have been the churches in which the British "bishops" officiated at the time of which we now write. So far as we can gather from their homilies and remains, the doctrine which they preached must have been free from the corruptions which had begun to prevail in the western church. They seem to have known nothing of image or saint worship, purgatory, auricular confession, or the sacrifice of the mass. The private use of the sacraments was forbidden, and the communion was observed in both kinds.* They were not mere celebrants, performing religion in an unknown tongue in the chancel, for the obedient and kneeling people in the nave. They were teachers of the people, preachers of the word of God; and their simple service would probably consist of little more than orally translating, from such versions as they possessed, very probably from the Greek originals, and with such comments as were prompted by a believing heart—the scriptural story of a Redeemer's love, and the duties of "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

On taking leave of the British church, we may turn to the northern part of England, which, at this early period, became indebted to the disciples of St Columba. Northumberland, in the seventh century, was inhabited by a rude and warlike people, living in pagan barbarism and superstition. But Oswald, one

* Wordsworth's "Ecclesiastical Biography," vol. i. p. 5.

of its native princes, having been in his youth an exile in Ireland, had imbibed from the missionaries of St Patrick some knowledge of christianity, and, on regaining his kingdom, became desirous for the enlightenment of his countrymen. He sent accordingly to Iona, and procured the services of one named Corman, a good man, but of austere manners, who met with no success, and who bitterly complained to the king of his refractory subjects. The complaint was overheard by a mild-looking monk who stood by, who replied, "It seems to me that your severe mode of dealing with the people is unsuited to their extreme ignorance. They should be treated as infants, with milk rather than with strong meat." This turned out to be Aidan, also a missionary from Iona. His gentle tones attracted the notice of Oswald, who ultimately entrusted the work into his hands, and he took up his residence in Lindisfarne or the Holy Isle. "This most holy man," says one witness, "was wont not only to teach the people committed to his charge in the church, but also, feeling for the weakness of a newly-born faith, to wander round the provinces, to go into the houses of the faithful, and to sow the seed of God's word in their hearts according to their capacities."* Like other Culdee pastors, he frequented most those places, and preached most in those villages lying far up in the rugged mountains, which, by reason of their poverty and barbarism, repelled the approach

* Vita Osweni. (Surtees Society, 1838.)

of visitors. His difficulty at first arose from ignorance of the language of the district; but we learn that, while he preached, King Oswald would frequently act as his interpreter. It must have been an interesting spectacle to see the prince standing by the side of the preacher, and translating his native Irish or Erse into English. Historians all agree in commending the virtues of this amiable man. Even Roman Bede owns that "he had a zeal of God," though careful to add, "not *wholly* according to knowledge." In his mode of life, he was "a most wholesome example of abstinence and purity;" he "had a church and chamber" (*ecclesiam et cubiculum*) near Bamborough, but his ministrations extended over the whole neighbourhood, both in the country and in towns which he visited, "not on horseback, but always, unless when compelled, on foot." As the result of his labours, with the blessing of God, the knowledge of Christ was spread abroad, not only in that district, but through various parts of England. "Unusual," exclaims Fuller, "that the sun should come out of the north to enlighten the south, as here it came to pass!"* Colleges have been founded, and cathedrals erected to his memory; but amidst the dazzling effects of modern change, we are apt to forget that no presbyterian pastor can now be lowlier in position, or humbler in pretension, than was the presbyter missionary of Northumberland, St Aidan.

* Fuller's Ch. Hist. i. p. 120.

A dark period, however, was at hand. In 716, the advancing tide of Romanism began to threaten the north of England. A synod was held at Whitby, the convent of the famous abbess Hilda, at which appeared on the one side Colman, abbot of Lindisfarne; and on the other side, Wilfrid, afterwards archbishop of York, who had acquired great influence over Oswy, King of Northumbria. In vain did Colman urge the uninterrupted descent of his church from St John; in vain did he appeal to the Celtic line of monks, abbots, and bishops, ending with Columba, the saintly founder of Iona. "Does he mean," cried the Latin bishop, "to set up the authority of Columba in opposition to that of St Peter, to whom were committed the keys of the kingdom of heaven?" Here the king broke in by addressing the Celtic clergy. "Do you own," he asked, "that St Peter has the keys of heaven?" Colman granted that Christ had indeed so addressed St Peter in the name of the other apostles, and was proceeding to explain the passage, but was interrupted by Oswy, who replied, "I will hold to the door-keeper of heaven, lest, when I knock at the gates, he should refuse me admission." With this jest the conference ended. Rome prevailed, and the northern lights were gradually extinguished. What might have been the result had the British and other branches of the Celtic church succeeded in the struggle, it is not easy to conjecture. But there is much force in the reflection of a recent historian, when he says, "A very deep interest attaches to this con-

test. If the British confession had prevailed, as at one time seemed probable, not England only, but also Germany, would, from the first, have stood in direct antagonism to the papacy—a circumstance which would have given an entirely different turn, both to the ecclesiastical and the political history of the middle ages.”* The development of the Roman church during those ages, in point of extension and authority, was indeed a remarkable moral phenomenon. But there are two kinds of development—that of health, and that of disease; that of error, and that of truth. In the case of the Roman communion, we see error swelling out from small beginnings into a magnitude bearing a monstrous resemblance to its original proportions. The development of truth, with less outward observation, like the seed sown in the earth, is destined to a resurrection more glorious because more spiritual and heavenly. Meanwhile, however, the extinction of its primitive christianity was followed in England, as in Scotland, by the long night of mediævalism. The interest of the historian, as well as of the christian, in the early records of its progress, ceases with the seventh century. The four ages that follow are all darkness. The twelfth century is a renewal of light, and the era of a great revolution in society; but until then, though the old paganism had vanished as a creed, it was only to make way for the symbolism and superstition of Rome.

* History of the Christian Church. By Prof. Kurtz. Vol. i. p. 295.

CHAPTER II.

ENGLISH PRESBYTERY IN THE MEDÆVAL CHURCH.

A.D. 1000-1500.

"*Thus, be thou lighted, Jerusalem, for comen is the light, and the glorie of the Lord ny on thee is sprunge. For lo! darknesses shal coberne the erthe, and mystiness the puple: ny on thee, forsothe, shal springe the Lord, and his glorie in thee shal be seen.*"

WYOLIFFE'S Translation of Isaiah lx. 1, 2.

"*A valliant martyr and a virtuous peer.*"

SHAKESPEARE'S Tribute to Sir John Oldcastle.

CHAPTER II.

A.D. 1000-1500.

English Presbytery in the Mediæval Church—John Wycliffe—The Lollards of England—Sir John Oldcastle.

It is not easy for us, who live in this age of books and bibles, newspapers, tracts, and magazines, to form a conception of the gross ignorance which hung over England five hundred years ago. We can hardly imagine what the state of education must have been when the art of printing was unknown, when the only school was the monastery, and when the Scriptures, splendidly bound indeed, and adorned with golden letters, were only known in a foreign tongue, and carefully immured, under lock and key, in the archives of the clergy. "What signifies it to speak of letters and learning," says Nicolas de Clemangis, "when we see almost all the priests without any knowledge?" "Twenty years ago," says another, writing in 1554, "who could say the Lord's Prayer in English? Who had ever heard of the Ten Commandments? Who knew what Catechism meant?"* If such was the state of things immediately before the Reformation, how dense must have been the darkness of the preceding ages, when ignorance was held to be the mother of devotion,

* Wordsworth's *Ecol. Biog.* i. 810.

when not a voice was raised against the reigning superstition, and when the priests, themselves addicted to every vice, and blind as the images they worshipped, were the only leaders of the blind! But the dawn long preceded the Reformation-day in England; the Bible had been opened, and the gospel had been preached, a hundred and fifty years before Luther was born.

In the later days of Edward IV., and in the age of "John of Gaunt, time-honoured Lancaster," lived the famous John Wycliffe. From his portrait, which has been preserved, some idea may be formed of the personal appearance of the man. He must have been a person of noble aspect and commanding attitude. The dark piercing eye, the aquiline features, and firm-set lips, with the sarcastic smile that mantles over them, exactly agree with all we know of the bold and unsparing character of the reformer. Of the personal incidents of his life extremely little is known; and even regarding his theological writings there has been considerable dispute.* Born in Yorkshire in 1324, he obtained the rectory of Lutterworth, in Leicestershire. How his eyes were first opened to penetrate the "mystery of iniquity" with which he was enveloped, or by what process of thought and study, he alone, among

* In the work of Dr Robert Vaughan we have the most elaborate and satisfactory view of the life, writings, and opinions of this reformer. The Religious Tract Society, in their "British Reformers," give large extracts from his writings; but Vaughan must be consulted in regard to the authenticity of these, and for a complete view of the progress of Wycliffe's religious sentiments.

all the thousands of priests around him, who lived quietly in their cloisters slumbering over their breviaries, should have come out as the champion of truth and the censor of his age, we are not specially informed. When we first meet him he is battling with the mendicant friars; those religious paupers, so severely satirised by Chaucer—

“ His wallet is before him on his lap,
Brimful of pardons come from Rome all hot ”—

were the special objects of his indignation. He styles them “ indolent and impudent beggars, roaming from house to house, taking advantage of the piety and simplicity of the people, and snatching the morsel of charity from the famishing mouths of the aged and infirm; their vows of poverty just amounting to this, that whoever should be hungry, they should be fed at the expense of the community, and riot on the earnings of industrious poverty,”—a style of invective strongly reminding us of that adopted by Buchanan and Knox against the friars of their time, and rather at variance with the romantic pictures which some have lately drawn of the monasteries as almshouses and asylums. As he boldly denounced the vices of all classes, and the leading errors of the church, his faithfulness soon brought him into collision with the churchmen. Fortunately, however, for him, the times favoured the personal safety of Wycliffe. An odious impost, levied by the pope on England, was resisted by the king and parliament, but was upheld by the clergy, who main-

tained that, unless payment was made, England would forfeit her sovereignty, and the monarch their allegiance. Against this degrading subserviency, Wycliffe, in the true spirit of the christian patriot, loudly protested, and thus at once gained the powerful patronage of the English nobility, and provoked the vengeance of the ecclesiastics. On February 19, 1376, he was summoned, by a papal bull, to appear at St Paul's, to answer to a charge of heresy. On that morning, a splendid convocation assembled, consisting of the dignified clergy, with the archbishop on his throne, supported by Courtenay, bishop of London. As the hour of trial arrived, the dignity of the court was outraged by a tumult at the door, occasioned by the entrance of the rector of Lutterworth, accompanied by the Earl Percy and the Duke of Lancaster, who, pushing the crowd aside, demanded room to be made for John Wycliffe. "Earl Percy," said Courtenay, "if I had known what masteries you would have kept in the church, I would have stopped you from coming hither." "We shall keep such masteries here," said Lancaster, "in spite of you." "Sit down, Wycliffe," said Percy; "you have many things to answer to, and you need to repose yourself on a soft seat." "It is unreasonable," cried the bishop, "that one cited before his ordinary should sit down during his answer; he must and shall stand." "The Lord Percy's motion is but reasonable," replied John of Gaunt. "And as for you, my lord bishop, who art grown so proud and

arrogant, I shall bring down the pride, not of you only, but of all the prelacy in England." After some further unseemly altercation, a scuffle ensued, in the midst of which Wycliffe was allowed to retire without even having been brought to trial. In the midst of his labours, he was seized with a dangerous illness, during which he received a visit from a deputation of his old foes the mendicant friars, who begged him, ere his departure, to revoke the charges he had brought against their order. On this occasion, raising himself on his bed, and fixing his keen eyes upon them, he replied, "I shall not die, but live, and shall yet declare the evil doings of the friars!" The anticipation was verified, for he lived several years in the active discharge of his functions; and at last, after many escapes, he died peaceably in his rectory, in 1364, in the sixtieth year of his age. "Admirable!" says Fuller, "that a hare so often hunted by so many packs of dogs should die at last quietly sitting on his form!"

Though less a theologian than a preacher, and aiming chiefly at the reigning vices of the period, Wycliffe may be regarded as the John Baptist of the Reformation. Three hundred of his sermons have been preserved, from which it is easy to judge of his religious sentiments. These, considering the age in which he lived, are remarkably pure and scriptural. He protests against the popular superstitions of his time—image and saint worship, pilgrimages, penances, relics, and holy water. On the subject of purgatory he seems to

have held something like an intermediate state, though opposed to all masses for the dead. On the eucharist, he is supposed by some to have leant towards the theory of Radbert in the ninth century; but if we may judge from various expressions, he appears to have been in advance of Luther, teaching that "what we see on the altar is neither Christ nor any part of him, but only an effective sign of him." Of justification he seems to have held views corresponding with those of Augustine, whom he perhaps followed too closely; the doctrine of imputation was not then controverted, but he pleads strongly for our free pardon through Christ.* "Heal us, O Lord, for nought; that is, for no merit of ours, but for thy mercy." Frequently does he declare that Christ is sufficient for our salvation. On some points, he was not only before his own age, but even before our own. He pleads for the perpetuity of the moral law, inclusive of the Sabbath. He denounces all war and capital punishment as unchristian. The hierarchy of Rome he held to be antichristian. And in regard to church government, we learn that he maintained, that "in the time of the apostle Paul, two orders of clergy were held sufficient for the church, priests and deacons; nor were there in the days of the apostle any such distinctions as pope, patriarchs, and bishops." †

* Dorner's "Protestant Theology," see note by the editor.

† See for authorities, "The Exclusive Claims of Puseyite Episcopalians." By John Brown, D.D., of Langton, p. 36.

But the material service which Wycliffe rendered to the cause of truth, and that which entitles him to be regarded as "The morning star of the Reformation," was his English version of the Scriptures. Though taken from the Vulgate, this translation is remarkably true to the original, and in its antique Saxon most expressive.* Transcribed in copies without number, the version had a wide circulation, and became an engine of amazing power. Multitudes were delighted to read, for the first time, "in their own tongue, the wonderful works of God."† A spirit of inquiry was awakened, and the seeds were sown of that religious revolution which, in little more than a century, convulsed the nations of Europe. The followers of "Wycliffe's learning,"‡ as it was called, "multiplied like suckers from the root of a

* Thus, instead of "Paul the servant of Jesus Christ," Wycliffe's version gives "Paul, the knave of Jesus Christ." For "Give not that which is holy to dogs," &c., Wycliffe says "Nil ye give holy things to houndis, ne cast your margarites befor swyne." For "Judge not, that ye be not judged," &c., he reads, "Nil ye deme, that ye be not demed." Instead of our version, "For a mightier than I cometh after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am unworthy to loose," his version is, "For a stalworthier than I cometh after me, the strings of whose chaucers I am not worthy to unlouse."

† The whole of the translation of the New Testament is considered the work of Wycliffe himself. The Old Testament was the work of Nicholas de Hereford, D.D., who, in 1382, was one of the leaders of the Lollard party in the University of Oxford; but Wycliffe is supposed to have commenced a revised version of the whole Bible. (Preface by editor of Wycliffe's Bible. Oxford, 1850.)

‡ By this term was meant Wycliffe's "doctrine," as we read of "Augustine's learning," that is, the system of doctrine taught by that father.

tree; they everywhere filled the kingdom, so that if you met two men on the road, you might be sure that one of them was a Wycliffite."* Nor were his sentiments confined to England—they were spread abroad on the continent, more especially in Bohemia, into which country the seeds of divine truth, gathered from his writings and from his version of the Scriptures, were conveyed by Anne of Bohemia, a pious princess, the widowed Queen of Richard II.

The followers of Wycliffe were generally called Lollards—a term of doubtful origin, given them in contempt, and never assumed by themselves.† These good people must be distinguished from the popular party, who found vent for their dislike of the priests and friars in the satires of Chaucer, Gower, and Langland. At this period, when stage plays were enacted in which the most sacred scenes and persons were introduced in ridiculous costumes, the churchmen could stand almost any amount of literary burlesque. But the Lollards were men of solemn mien and serious conversation. They kept themselves aloof from the frivolities, and even from the ordinary traffic of society. They spent their time in prayer and in the reading of Holy Scripture. They claimed the right of judging for themselves, and would only obey the church "in as far as the church was obedient, in work and word,

* Twysden, *Decem Scriptores*, col. 2863.

† "They have brought their malice about to *stander for Lollards* those that speak for God."—*Lantern of Light*, ch. iii.

to God and his law." They went a step further than this; for Rome they regarded as the "anti-christ" of Scripture, and they plainly condemned the sacrifice of the mass as idolatry. These poor people were not to be tolerated; and though at this time without any church organisation, and seldom meeting in great numbers, they became the victims of a systematic and bloody persecution.

The Church of Rome had now begun to put in practice the barbarous statute *de hæretico comburendo*—the burning of heretics to death. Already, at the Council of Constance, in the year 1415, had the celebrated John Huss, the reformer of Bohemia, and the disciple of Wycliffe, been committed to the flames, in violation of a promise of safety granted to him by the Emperor Sigismund. And in imitation of this act of treachery and murder, it was now resolved that the heresy of Lollardism should be punished by burning at the stake. But, before commencing the tragedy, a singular prologue was enacted. Having been baffled in their designs upon the living person of Wycliffe, they proposed to compensate by taking vengeance on his bones. In 1412, Archbishop Arundel wrote to the pope, complaining of the wide-spread heresies of Wycliffe, whom he styles "that pestilent and miserable man of accursed memory, that son of the old serpent and forerunner of antichrist," and praying that his books may be condemned, and his body cast into a dunghill, or reduced to ashes. This request appears to have been

conveyed to the Council at Constance, by whom the exhumation of Wycliffe's body was solemnly adjudged, "if it may be discerned from the bodies of other faithful people." And about 1415, his bones having been dug up and burnt, they threw the ashes into a brook called the Swift. "Thus," says Fuller, "the brook conveyed his ashes into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, and they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all the world over." *

Nothing testifies so much to the alarm inspired by the progress of the new opinions than the desperate measures taken to suppress them. Death, in its ordinary forms, was too simple a doom; the fire only, as at once an instrument of terror and an emblem of the future destiny of the heretic, could proclaim the heinousness of his crime, and typify the annihilation of his doctrine. At the same time, in order to secure the aid of the civil power for the execution of a sen-

* "No revolution has been more gradually prepared than that which separated almost one-half of Europe from the communion of the Roman see; nor were Luther and Zwingli any more than occasional instruments of this change, which, had they never existed, would, at no great distance of time, have been effected under the names of some other reformers. Not even Germany was so far advanced in this course as England. About a hundred and fifty years before Luther, nearly the same doctrine as he taught had been maintained by Wycliffe, whose disciples, usually called Lollards, existed as a numerous, though obscure and proscribed sect, till, aided by the confluence of foreign streams, they swelled into the Protestant Church of England."—*Hallam's Const. Hist. of England*, vol. i. p. 57.

tence which the church pretended to be too meek and merciful to inflict with her own hands, it was of importance to link the charge of heresy with that of treason. From Henry IV., who, having usurped the crown, placed much dependence on the clergy for upholding his authority, they obtained, without the consent of parliament, the bloody edict that "the heretic, if he refused to abjure, or relapsed, *should be burned alive*, in a conspicuous place, for the terror of others." This statute was immediately carried into effect; for the same year William Sawtre, priest of St Osyth's, in London, was accused of heresy, for having denied the dogma of transubstantiation, and refusing to worship the cross; and he died in the flames at Smithfield February 12, 1401, having thus the honour to be the first of the noble army of English martyrs. The next was a poor shoemaker, named John Badley, who, we are informed, when put into the barrel, and feeling the first bitter touch of the fire, cried out "Mercy!" Upon hearing this, the Prince of Wales, who happened to pass at the time, ordered his release, and promised him pardon, and a pension for life, if he would recant his opinions. But the martyr had regained his courage, and refused the bribe; upon which the prince ordered him to be replaced in the barrel, where he died in the flames. "Prince Harry, with his beaver off," rode away from the scene, thinking, no doubt, that he had acted very generously as a king's son, and dutifully as a son of the church; but leaving us to judge which most to

admire, the conduct of the prince, or that of the humble shoemaker, who, by preferring a fiery death in the cause of the Prince of life, gained a victory "worth a hundred Agincourts." The case of a priest named William Thorpe presents a beautiful picture of the piety, zeal, and resignation displayed by these confessors in the hour of trial. His examination, drawn up by himself, is remarkable for the elegance of its style, and the lively dramatic air with which it is composed, as well as the learning and force of its arguments. At last, when Arundel threatened him with being burned at Smithfield unless he abjured his opinions, he writes, "At this saying, I stood still and spake not; but I thought in mine heart that God did me great grace if he would, of his mercy, bring me to such an end. In my heart I prayed the Lord God to comfort me and strengthen me against them, and to give me then and always grace to speak with a meek and easy spirit, and that whatsoever I should speak, I might thereto have true authority of the Scriptures, or open reason." Other executions followed in quick succession; but instead of dwelling upon these, we select the following episode as illustrative of the period.

Under the reign of Henry IV., and of his son Henry V., there lived a brave old knight, named Sir John Oldcastle, or, as he was sometimes called, from his marriage, Lord Cobham. In early life, by his own confession, he had led a gay and careless life, like his

companions, addicted to courtly pleasures and to deeds of blood. But the perusal of the Scriptures, and the writings of Wycliffe, had produced an entire change on his character; "the valiant captain and hardy gentleman" of former days became a decided christian. He still retained, however, in his new career, all the native qualities which marked the stalwart English knight of the fifteenth century. He made no secret of his sentiments, and in his place in parliament openly avowed that "there would be no peace in England till the authority of the pope was sent over the sea," and that the ill-gotten wealth of the church should be confiscated to the use of the crown.* At the same time, his castle of Cowling, near Rochester, afforded a ready asylum to the persecuted Lollards; and when any of their ministers officiated in the open air, Sir John would stand at their side, sword in hand, to protect them against the insults of the friars. Thus, stung in two of their tenderest parts, their avarice and their superstition, the clergy never ceased to seek his ruin and disgrace. They first attempted to poison his reputation by conveying absurd rumours to the ears of Henry IV., with whom he stood in high favour. Henry proposed a private interview, hoping to overcome the religious scruples of his friend; but on this point he found him immovable. "You, most worthy prince," said Sir

* Bale's Brefs Chronycle of Sir Johann Oldcastell, Harleian MS. British Mus., vol. i. p. 274.

John, "I am always prompt and willing to obey, forasmuch as I know you are a christian king, and the appointed minister of God. But as touching the pope and the spirituality, I owe them neither suit nor service, forasmuch as I know him, by the Scriptures, to be the great antichrist, the son of perdition, and the abomination standing in the holy place." He then appealed to Henry, as "his supreme head and only competent judge," to settle the quarrel between him and his accusers; and upon the king declining this, Sir John, in the spirit of ancient chivalry, proposed that it should be decided by an appeal to arms. He offered to bring a hundred knights and esquires into the field for his purgation against an equal number on the side of his opponents; or else, said he, "I shall fight myself for life or death with any man living, christian or heathen, your majesty and the lords of council only excepted." Little to his honour, Henry rejected this proposal also; and yielding to temper or policy, he left the brave old knight to the tender mercies of the clergy, who were thirsting for his blood in a way more congenial to their taste. He was summoned to appear before their secret inquisition; but acting on his principle that he "owed neither suit nor service" to the vassals of the pope, he paid no regard to their ghostly citations, which were torn down by his retainers.* Swelling with rage at this insult, Arundel was obliged at length to pro-

* Hollinshed's Chron., vol. iii. p. 544; Bale, Fox, &c.

cure a royal summons, which Oldcastle instantly obeyed, and his enemies had the satisfaction of seeing him safely lodged in the Tower.

On being brought before an assembly of bishops in the chapter-house of St Paul's, Cobham produced a written confession of his faith. In this he admitted that "in the sacrament of the altar was Christ's very body in the form of bread." "It is manifest heresy," said his inquisitors, "to say that it is any longer *bread*, after the sacramental words are spoken." "St Paul," replied Sir John, "I am sure was as wise as you are, and more godly learned, and yet he called it bread; 'The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?' Lo! he calleth it bread, and not Christ's body, but a means whereby we receive Christ's body." To the charge of sedition, of which so much use was afterwards made, he merely replied by denying it, and remarking that "Christ and his apostles were both accused of sedition-making, yet were they most peaceable men." When taunted with being a disciple of Wycliffe, "As for that virtuous man," he said, "I shall only say, before God and men, that before I knew that despised doctrine of his, I never abstained from sin; but since that, it hath been otherwise, I trust, with me." "What say ye of the pope?" asked one of his judges. "As I said before," returned Sir John; "he and you together make up the great antichrist; he the head, you the body, and the friars the tail." "Will ye worship the

cross of Christ that he died upon?" asked another. "Where is it?" said Oldcastle. "I put the case that it was here before you," returned the bishop. "This," replied Cobham, stretching out his arms, "this is a real cross, and so much the better than your wooden cross, in that it was formed of God; yet I will not seek to have it worshipped." "Sir," cried the bishop of London, "ye wot well that he died upon a material cross." "Yes," replied Sir John, "and I wot well that our salvation came not by that material cross, but by him alone who died thereupon."

The trial lasted two days, and the result was that Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, was condemned for "a most pernicious and detestable heretic, committing him henceforth to the secular jurisdiction *to do him thereupon to death.*" This atrocious sentence was pronounced by Archbishop Arundel, as he himself declares in his account of the trial, "in good and modest terms, and in the kindest and sweetest manner, with a weeping countenance."* On hearing the sentence, Sir John, kneeling on the pavement, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, filled with tears of genuine feeling, prayed as follows:—"I confess myself to thee, my eternal living God, that, in my frail youth, I offended thee most grievously in pride, wrath, luxury, and avarice. Many men have I hurt

* "Bonis et modestis terminis, ac modo multum suavi,—affabiliter et suaviter recitavit excommunicationem, flebili vultu," &c.—*Rymer's Fœdera*, vol. iv. p. 50.

in mine anger, and done many other horrible sins : good Lord, I ask thee mercy !” Then turning to the multitude, he cried, “ Lo ! good people, for the breaking of God’s law these men never yet cursed me ; but now, for their own laws and traditions, they must cruelly handle me and other men.” *

While confined in the Tower, his accusers, though resolved on his death, were afraid that the firmness which he had shown at his trial might, if exhibited at the stake, tell powerfully against the church. They therefore published a forged recantation in his name. This he immediately answered ; but perceiving that, from such unprincipled bigots he could expect no justice, and that from the king, who was entirely in their hands, he could look for no mercy, he resolved on saving his life, and, either through his friends or the connivance of the governor, he succeeded in escaping from prison. Soon after his escape, Henry IV. and Arundel were summoned to a higher tribunal ; and Henry V., on coming to the throne, showed no disposition to prosecute the Lollards. † The nobility and parliament were also ominously inclined to confiscate the revenues of the church. History unfolds the crafty devices of the clergy to

* Lingard’s commentary on the trial is in the true spirit of the religion which doomed the martyr to the stake with crocodile tears :— “ The prisoner’s conduct was as arrogant and insulting as that of his judge was *mild and dignified*.”—*History of England*, vol. v. p. 5.

† Rymer’s *Fœdera*, tom. iv. part ii. 72, Pro Lollardis, de Pardonatione ; Hollinshed’s *Chron.*, iii. 544.

divert the mind of the king from this project, by involving him in a war with France; but it fails to explain another plot, laid by them nearer home, for accomplishing the same end. In January 1414, they told the king of a formidable insurrection of the Lollards, with Sir John Oldcastle at its head, who proposed to murder the king and royal family, to pull down Westminster Abbey and all the cathedrals in the land and to *confiscate all the possessions of the church!* To impart more feasibility to the story, they specified the time and place of meeting. It was to take place at midnight, in St Giles-in-the-Fields, then overgrown with thickets. The king fell into the snare; his martial spirit was roused, and ordering the gates of the city to be closed behind him, he marched out at the head of a large body of troops, under the banner of the cross, to the appointed spot, where he encountered, not an army of rebels, but a Lollard conventicle. The poor people, having neither arms nor leaders, startled in the midst of their devotions, rushed frantically among the troops, and a few of them, with their minister, were secured without the slightest resistance. Such was the hoax which some historians have magnified into a serious insurrection. There is reason to believe that Henry was heartily ashamed of it, seeing that the whole affair was nothing more than a device of the priests.* But the next ruse

* "The complaint was judged true, because the bishops had spoken it at the information of their priests."—*Walden*, in Bale's *Brefe*

adopted by the clergy proved more profitable to its contrivers. The parliament which met at Leicester, April 1414, had encouraged the king to venture on the church lands; but the churchmen, by a piece of exquisite policy, managed to procure an enactment by which, on pretence of condemning the Lollards for aiming at the alienation of church property, it was ordained that all such offenders "should first be hanged for treason against the king, and next burned for heresy against God." By inadvertently passing this statute, parliament at once tied up its own hands, and placed unlimited power into those of the clergy; and by this clever trick the Reformation may be said to have been retarded for a hundred and twenty years.

The eventful history of Sir John Oldcastle now draws to a close. His unrelenting enemies succeeded in exempting him from the indemnity granted to the Lollards; and, in the year 1418, after wandering for four years among the mountains of Wales, the reward of a thousand merks set upon his head proved too strong for the avarice of Lord Powis, who discovered his retreat, and betrayed him to his pursuers. In the scuffle attending his capture, his leg was broken, and the maimed old soldier was dragged in a horse-litter to his former abode in the Tower. Having, by his escape from prison, incurred the penalty of outlawry, Chronicle, Harl. Mis., i. 27. Even Walsingham can only say, "The king heard they intended to destroy him and the monasteries; and many were taken who were said (*qui dicebantur*) to have conspired against him."—*Hist. Angl.*, p. 431.

and having been already condemned to death by the spiritual court for heresy, there was no need for a further trial. Sir John, accordingly, being called upon, "on the part of the king, if he had anything to say why execution should not be done upon him *upon the aforesaid outlawry (utlagerie)*, to this demand the said John *said nothing to excuse himself on that point (celle partie)*, and was thereupon condemned."* To this charge of outlawry, having fled from justice, he could "say nothing," but contented himself with appealing to the royal mercy.† This appeal was disregarded; and the clergy, taking advantage of the *ex post facto* law which they had smuggled through parliament identifying Lollardism with treason as well as heresy, he was adjudged to suffer as "a traitor to God and a traitor to the king."

No time was lost in carrying the iniquitous sentence into execution. He was drawn in a hurdle to St Giles-in-the-Fields, where the farce of the insurrection was to have taken place, "with his hands bound, but with a very cheerful countenance." His sentence

* The author has authenticated this fact by personal search into the acts of parliament. Rot. Parl., iv. 107-110, Rolls Court, London.

† Lingard's version of the story is, that, in answer to the charge of "*treasonable conspiracy*"—the charge being that of *outlawry*—"he made no answer, but preached a *long sermon* on one of the favourite doctrines of his sect, the duty of man to forgive, and leave the punishment of offences in the hands of the Almighty!" We make no comment on this cold-hearted slander, worthy of the days of monkish spite and bigotry. There is nothing more in the records than a simple appeal to mercy, reminding one of Portia's address in the "*Merchant of Venice*."

was, that he should be hung in chains, and consumed in the fire. From several authentic sources we learn that he behaved himself in a way becoming a brave knight and christian martyr. He prayed for the forgiveness of his enemies; he exhorted the people to follow the laws of God written in the scriptures, taking heed of those who were contrary to Christ in their life and conversation. Hung up by the middle in iron chains, the martyr of Christ may be said to have been literally broiled alive; and yet, in the midst of this barbaric torture, while the priests, who witnessed it with ill-concealed satisfaction, forbade the people to pray for him, the sufferer never lost his composure, but "died praising the name of God while life lasted."* "And thus," says Bale, "rested this valiant knight, Sir John Oldcastle, under the altar of God, which is Jesus Christ, among that godly company who, in the kingdom of patience, suffered great tribulation, he abiding with them, fulfilling the number of his elect. Amen."

History has its compensations as well as its retributions. A special providence seems to watch over the names of those who have suffered in the cause of Christ and his truth. Their memory may lie under a cloud of calumny and reproach for ages; but when men least expect it, and sometimes from the most unexpected quarters, the cloud may be dispelled, and

* Fox, Acts and Monuments, book v.

tardy justice is done to their real worth. So has it happened in regard to the memory of Sir John Oldcastle. Fuller informs us that his name was the make-sport in old plays. But even Fuller leaves him at last in the shade. Strangely enough, a witness was raised up to bear testimony in favour of the outraged memory of the martyr, in the person of one whom few will venture to suspect of partiality or partisanship—no less than our poet Shakespeare! At first, the dramatist had represented Sir John in the odious light of the old plays, as a braggart, a debauchee, and a poltroon. But having satisfied himself as to the real character of the true Sir John, he not only substituted for his name that of Sir John Falstaff, but in a play entitled “The History of the Good Lord Cobham,” he, or another under his eye, made an ample apology for his former mistake, pronouncing him “A VALIANT MARTYR AND A VIRTUOUS PEER.” We have great pleasure in subjoining the following extract from a recent interesting volume, in which this testimony to the true character of Sir John has been eloquently expressed:—

“This false Sir John was the creation of those monks and friars against whom the true Sir John had fought his manly fight. Those friars composed our early plays; those friars conducted our early dumb shows; in many of which the first great heretic ever burned in England was a figure. Those friars would naturally gift their assailant with the ugliest views; for how could an enemy of friars be gallant, young, and pious? In this degraded form the name of Oldcastle was handed down from fair to fair, from inn-yard to inn-yard, until it took immortal shape on

Shakespeare's stage. Now comes a personal query, the significance of which will not be overlooked by men who wish to learn what they can of Shakespeare's life. Why, after giving to the Oldcastle tradition that immortal shape, did Shakespeare change the name of his buffoon to Falstaff, and separate himself for ever from the party of abuse? The point is very curious. Some motive of unusual strength must have come into play before such a course could have been taken by the poet. It is not the change of a name, but of a state of mind. For Shakespeare is not content with striking out the name of Oldcastle and writing down that of Falstaff. He does more—much more—something beyond example in his works—*he makes a confession of his faith*. In his own person, as poet and as man, he proclaims from the stage—'Oldcastle died a martyr!' That was a sentiment which Raleigh might have held, which Cartwright would have expressed. It was the thought for which Weever was then struggling in his 'Poetical Life of Sir John Oldcastle;' for which James, the friend of Jonson, if not Shakespeare, was compiling his 'Defence of the Noble Knight and Martyr Sir John Oldcastle.' The occurrence of such a proclamation suggests that, between the first production of 'Henry the Fourth' and the date of his printed quarto, Shakespeare changed his way of looking at the old heroes of English thought. In the year 1600, a play was printed in London with the title, 'The First Part of the True and Honourable History of the Life of Sir John Oldcastle, the Good Lord Cobham.' The title-page bore Shakespeare's name. 'Sir John Oldcastle' is now regarded by every one as a play from other pens; in fact, it is known to have been written by three of Shakespeare's fellow-playwrights; but many good critics think the poet may have written some of the lines and edited the work. This drama was a protest against the wrong which had been done to Oldcastle on the stage by Shakespeare. The prologue said—

' It is no pampered glutton we present,
Nor aged councillor to youthful sin;
But one whose virtue shone above the rest,
A valiant martyr and a virtuous peer.'

These lines are thought to be Shakespeare's own. They are in his vein, and they repeat the declaration which he had already

made: 'Oldcastle died a martyr!' The man who wrote this confession in the days of Archbishop Whitgift was a Puritan in faith."*

* Her Majesty's Tower, vol. i., Sir John Oldcastle. By W. Hepworth Dixon.

The reader who is desirous to know the whole history of this interesting episode may consult Charles Knight's "Studies and Illustrations of the Writings of Shakespeare," vol. ii. p. 269. Here the fact is brought out that, in his epilogue to "The Second Part of Henry IV.," Shakespeare has the following passage:—"For anything I know, Falstaff shall die of a sweat; for Oldcastle died a martyr, and this is not the man;" besides other contemporary testimonies, proving that "Sir John Oldcastle appears to have been a man of valour and virtue, and only lost in his own times because he would not bow under the foul superstition of papistry."

CHAPTER III.

ENGLISH PRESBYTERY IN THE REFORMATION CHURCH.

A.D. 1500-1558.

“When I recall to mind, after so many dark ages, wherein the huge overshadowing train of error had almost swept all the stars out of the firmament of the church, how the bright and blissful Reformation, by divine power, struck through the black and settled night of ignorance and anti-christian tyranny, methinks a sovereign and reviving joy must needs rush into the bosom of him that reads or hears ; and the sweet odour of the returning gospel imbathe his soul with the fragraney of heaven. Then was the sacred bible sought out of the dusty corners where profane falsehood and neglect had thrown it, the schools opened, divine and human learning raked out of the embers of forgotten tongues, the princes and cities trooping apace to the new-erected banner of salvation ; the martyrs, with the irresistible might of weakness, shaking the powers of darkness, and scorning the fiery rage of the old red dragon.”

MILTON'S *Prose Works*, “*Of Reformation in England.*”

CHAPTER III.

A.D. 1500-1558.

*English Presbytery in the Reformation Church—Concord with
Primitive Episcopacy—The Martyr Bishops of England.*

IN the history of England, the Reformation has unhappily, and, we may add, unhistorically, been associated with the name of Henry VIII. The conduct of that monarch was no doubt the occasion of the separation of England from the papal see; but for the reformation of the Church of England Henry is no more entitled to credit than the pope himself. The passions of the one and the policy of the other helped, under Providence, to accomplish an end which neither of them contemplated. In the early part of his reign, Henry appeared as the champion of the papacy against Martin Luther, in a treatise on the sacraments; a service for which the pope rewarded him by the title of Defender of the Faith, but which brought down upon him a reply from the German reformer written in a style vying in scorn and invective with that of his royal antagonist. His assumption of the headship of the church was a

political measure, investing the monarch with papal authority; and the spoliation of the rich abbacies and monasteries was marked by a reckless rapacity which puts it beyond the pale of religious reform. His divorce from Catharine of Arragon, with his subsequent scandalous marriages, stamp his name with infamy. His six articles, under which many suffered death, were an attempt to uphold catholicism without the pope. But Henry VIII. can no more be called the father of the English Reformation than the thunder-cloud which opens the path for the genial shower can be said to have produced the harvest. Just as the angry elements of the pontiff and the monarch burst into storm, another cause came into operation—the printing of the English bible. Wycliffe's version, being in manuscript, could only have a limited circulation; and a hundred and fifty years had elapsed from the invention of the art of printing before England saw a printed copy of the scriptures. The man to whom she was first indebted for this boon was William Tyndale, a scholar of Oxford, converted by reading the bible in the Latin of Erasmus. "If God spare my life," he said to a priest with whom he disputed, "ere many years I shall cause the boy that drives the plough to know more of the scriptures than you do." Having retired to Cologne, he commenced his enterprise with great secrecy; but was discovered by John Cochlaeus, a bitter foe of the Reformation, who pounced upon the work when in the press, and warned Wolsey

to close every port, and search every ship for "this most pestilent merchandise." Aided by the darkness of night, Tyndale escaped with some of the sheets in a boat up the Rhine; and at Worms, in 1525, produced two editions of the bible, which were conveyed, like contraband goods, to England under the hatches of a merchant vessel. These, on being detected, were immediately seized, and solemnly committed to the flames; while orders were sent to Holland to buy up the whole impression. With the money thus procured, a fresh edition was thrown off, and widely circulated. But the clergy were not content with burning the bible. Many who were found with it in their possession suffered the same doom, and among the rest the excellent and kind-hearted Tyndale. At Antwerp, when returning home from his "pastimes," as he called his charitable visits to the poor, he encountered two English bailiffs, who had been sent to apprehend him. These men he invited to dine with him, and after partaking of his hospitality, they seized on him as their prisoner, and, under an order from the emperor, he was committed to the flames. He died, October 6, 1536, with these words on his lips, "Lord, open the eyes of the king of England!"

The death of Henry, and the accession of Edward VI., put a stop to these miserable executions, and introduced a period of quiet, during which were laid the foundations of the Reformed Church of England. The main instrument in this work was Thomas Cran-

mer, archbishop of Canterbury. His accession to the reformed opinions was gradual. Naturally timid and cautious, he was fitted to shine only in a time of peace, and wanted nerve and decision to withstand the headstrong career of the imperious Henry. There is reason to believe that his bitter foes, Gardiner and Bonner, who knew his private sentiments, managed to put him forward in the execution of deeds from which they knew his heart revolted. It must have been with inward loathing that he read the sentences consigning to the stake the pious young scholar John Frith, for not being able to believe in transubstantiation, and upon the gentle and accomplished maiden Anne Ascough, whom Chancellor Wriothesley, unable to conquer her by argument, placed on the rack, and plied the torture with his own hand, to prove his manly zeal for her conversion. Even under the unpropitious reign of Henry, however, Cranmer succeeded in carrying out some measures of reform. Among these was the publication of the translation of the bible by Miles Coverdale, which appeared, under the sanction of royalty, in 1535, and contributed largely to the spread of true religion. This was followed by a curious scene of retaliation on the memory of Thomas Beckett, archbishop of Canterbury in the twelfth century, who had fallen a victim to his priestly ambition in opposition to his sovereign Henry II. His death was held by the clergy as a martyrdom, and his tomb was adorned with gold and jewels, the costly

offerings of multitudes who resorted to it in pilgrimage. On the advice of Cranmer, the king put a stop to this superstition. Beckett was summoned as guilty of treason, and failing to appear, his shrine was despoiled of its treasures, and his name erased from the calendar of saints. On the accession of Edward, Cranmer was appointed regent of the kingdom, and the real reform commenced. Preaching before the youthful monarch at his coronation, he set before him the example of Josiah and other good princes, commended in scripture; urged him to see that God be truly worshipped in the land, that idolatry should be destroyed, and the tyranny of the Romish bishops put down. At the same time, in the event of his failing to discharge his duties, he disclaimed the popish claim of denouncing him as having thereby forfeited his crown.* By acts of council and convocation, the popish service was abolished; whereupon, says Bishop Jewel, "the mass of itself fell down and fled away before the holy communion, even as the darkness before the light, and as the idol Dagon before the ark of the God of Israel." † For the Latin mass-book was substituted the Book of Common Prayer in English, divested of its prayers for the dead and other superstitions; the marriage of priests was legalised; catechisms and books of devotion were prepared for the people; and the clergy

* Strype's Memorials of Cranmer, p. 145.

† Works of Bishop Jewel.

were charged to "root out the relics of popery, as plants which our heavenly Father hath not planted." At the same time, while the public monuments of idolatry were removed, and the laws by which the old religion had sunk its shafts deeply into the civil constitution were abolished, no compulsion was used, no prosecutions for heresy were instituted. The independence of the church was so far secured by her being left at liberty to introduce new reforms, if deemed by her expedient; while the civil sanction was only regarded as an act of homage paid by the state to religion, and a shield over the church for the protection of her native liberties. With characteristic caution, Cranmer felt his way at every step; while at the same time he showed at once his candour and wisdom by soliciting counsel and receiving suggestions from various quarters.

The perfect concord that subsisted between the English and the foreign reformers affords a beautiful episode. In 1548, Cranmer addressed a letter to his old friend Philip Melancthon on the union of all the protestant churches, by having "one common confession and harmony of faith and doctrine, drawn up out of the pure word of God, which all might own and agree in." He had observed, he said, with deep regret, the differences among protestants on the doctrine of the sacraments, on the divine decrees, and the government of the church, which exposed the professors of the gospel to the contempt of the Roman communion;

and he proposed that a conference of leading ministers should be held in England to deliberate on some form of concord. The reply of Melancthon was, like himself, kind and gentle; though those who charge him with weakness may be surprised to find that he insists on avoiding ambiguity, and urges the use of unmistakable terms. Calvin, to whom the archbishop submitted the same proposal, was, if possible, still more cordial, urging Cranmer to carry out his purpose without delay, as from his age he had not much time to lose; for his own part, he said, he was "willing to cross ten seas" to be present at such a conference, but, owing to the shattered state of his health, he could only send them his prayers and best wishes.* This, as we shall see, was not the only occasion on which Calvin expressed his intense desire for such a desirable object. It is further stated that he, together with Bullinger, and other foreign divines, sent a letter in 1549 to Edward VI. "offering to own him as their defender, and to have bishops in their churches for better unity and concord among them;" and that this letter, having fallen into the hands of Bonner and Gardiner, was suppressed, and never reached its destination.† Whatever truth may be in this statement, there can be no doubt as to the moderation of the views held by these reformers.

With regard to set forms of worship, Calvin

* Strype's Cranmer, pp. 407-409; Calv. Epist. 126.

† Strype's Cranmer, p. 207.

approved of their expediency as church arrangements, "to provide for the ignorance and unskilfulness of some, to guard against the levity of others, and to manifest more certainly the mutual consent and harmony of the churches;" and the use of such formularies, not exclusively indeed, but mainly in such ritual services as the sacraments, marriage, and burial, he advocated as matters of church order and not of penal enactment. On the question of episcopacy, his sentiments are well known to have been equally moderate. His opinion doubtless was that the most scriptural form of government was what has been called the presbyterian; but none could be more mild and tolerant than he in regard to the episcopate where this had been introduced, and when it was conducted in a way consistent with the essential principles of the gospel. He firmly maintained that in scripture and in apostolic usage bishop and presbyter were synonymous terms, and that the church was originally governed, according to the famous saying of Jerome, "by the common council of the presbyters" (*communi consilio presbyterorum*); and it was only when viewed as a *human* institution, introduced for the purpose of order, that he spoke so favourably of episcopacy.* But in these

* "Let them show us such a hierarchy, in which the bishops are distinguished, but not for refusing to be subject to Christ; in which they depend upon him, and cultivate brotherly love, bound by no other tie than his truth: then, indeed, I will confess that there is no anathema too strong for those who do not regard them with reverence,

views, he was entirely at one with Cranmer and the other reforming divines of the church of England.

A late writer alleges that, in his letters, "Calvin fiercely attacked not only the prayer-book, but the whole principle of the English reformation;" and adverting to his proposal to make Edward VI. their "defender," says that "if there was to be a protestant pope, Calvin aspired to that office himself."* Where the authorities for such statements are to be found, it is not easy to conjecture. The severest thing Calvin ever said of the prayer-book is the well-known remark that "it seemed to contain some tolerable trifles" (*tolerabiles ineptias*); and the strongest censure on the English polity which probably ever escaped his pen is an expression of regret, dropped in his commentaries, "that those who at first exalted Henry king of England, by giving him the supreme power in all things, were certainly inconsiderate; and this has always grievously vexed me (*hoc me semper graviter vulnerabit*); for they were chargeable with blasphemy

and yield them the fullest obedience."—*Calvin's Tracts: Necessity of Reform*, p. 217, Calv. Trans. Soc. "To the government thus constituted" (by bishops, patriarchs, &c.) "some give the name of hierarchy—a name, in my judgment, improper, and certainly not used in scripture; for the Holy Spirit designed that no one should dream of primacy or domination in the government of the church. But if, disregarding the term, we look to the thing, we shall find that the ancient bishops had no wish to frame a form of church government different from that which God has prescribed in his word."—*Calvin's Institutes*, b. iv. p. 77.

* *Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, by Walter F. Hook, D.D., vol. ii. (new ser.) p. 287.

(*erant blasphemi*) when they styled him the chief head of the church under Christ."* If, indeed, there is any point on which modern presbyterians feel a difficulty here, it is when called upon to reconcile the creed and polity of Calvin and his brethren, the foreign divines, with the extremely cordial and liberal tone in which they dealt with the liturgy, the ceremonies, and the polity of the church of England.

We shall only add that, in their turn, the English reformers manifested the highest esteem and respect towards their brethren in foreign parts. The ministerial orders of foreign churches were freely acknowledged. Martin Bucer of Germany, and Peter Martyr of Italy, were called to professorships in Cambridge and Oxford. John Knox of Scotland was offered the bishopric of Rochester. By the advice of these divines, several important amendments were made upon the liturgy in 1551, such as the omission of the chrism in baptism, unction of the sick, and prayers for the dead, and the introduction of the rubric that "by kneeling in the communion no adoration is intended unto any corporeal presence of Christ's natural flesh and blood."† One can hardly help lamenting that such a general synod as that which was then projected never met; and we can

* Calv. Com. Amos, vii. 13.

† "A *renegade Scot* (John Knox) did take away the adoration of Christ in the sacrament—so much prevailed that one man's authority at that time."—*Dr Weston* (see Knox's Works, by David Laing, Esq., vol. iii. p. 80).

now only speculate on what might have been the result of a friendly alliance between the Anglicanism of Cranmer and Ridley, the Lutheranism of Melancthon and Bullinger, and the presbyterianism of Calvin and Knox. All we can say is that, at this period, there was every prospect of a blessed unity and harmony among the protestant churches at home and abroad.*

The premature death of Edward and the accession of his sister Mary blighted these fair hopes, and plunged the church and nation into disastrous gloom. That unhappy princess, who had imbibed the worst principles of popery at a time when the atmosphere was charged with the intensest spirit of reform, no sooner ascended the throne than she overthrew all that had been done for the purification of the church during the previous reign; the authority of the Romish see was restored; Bishops Bonner and Gardiner were reinstated in power; and, as soon as Parliament could be gained over to her purposes, the flames of persecution were kindled. The bishops who had distinguished themselves in putting down the Romish religion became the first victims. Dr John Hooper, bishop of Gloucester, was a man of simple piety, a sound theologian, and zealous preacher; but so little of the prelate, that his brethren had difficulty

* Strype's Annals, ii. 286, 342; Burnet's Hist. Reformation, ii. 83, Zurich Letters, *passim*; M'Crie's Life of Knox, Note R. on Sentiments of English Reformers.

in inducing him to accept the office; he absolutely refused at first to be ordained in the episcopal habits, and gave such offence by this scrupulosity, that he was actually committed for a time to prison. He had probably contracted these strict views during his residence on the continent. On bidding farewell to Bullinger, with that prophetic augury of his doom which more than one of these witnesses seem to have experienced, he told his friend that "he should hear of his being burned to ashes." Dragged by Gardiner from his diocese, the good man may be said to have been led as a lamb to the slaughter. His execution at Smithfield, February 9, 1555, is one of the most affecting incidents in English history. "I am not come hither," he said, "as one enforced to die; for it is well known I might have had my life with worldly gain." On being bound to the stake with chains, "You have no need to trouble yourselves," he said; "for I have no doubt but God will give me strength sufficient to abide the extremity of the fire without bonds; notwithstanding, as I suspect the frailty of the flesh, I am content you should do as you think good." Thrice were fresh faggots applied to the pile without any other effect than to scorch his body, upon which he cried, "For God's love, good people, let me have more fire!" Bags of gunpowder attached to his person now exploded, blackening and mangling him, and in the midst of this torment he expired, praying with his latest breath, "Lord

Jesus, have mercy on me! Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

The martyrdom of Hooper was obviously intended as a feeler. The doom of his brother bishops was determined, as a sacrifice to the Moloch of popish retribution; but some time was allowed to elapse before venturing upon the next victims. These were bishops Ridley and Latimer. Considering the high reputation of the men, their position and character, their execution was likely to strike terror into the protestants, but it might also arouse public sympathy. Religious rancour prevailed, and the bishops were indicted for heresy. Few men appear on the canvas of history with a loftier character than Dr Nicholas Ridley. A native of Northumberland, and sprung from an illustrious ancestry, he was raised, in virtue of his learning and sanctity, to the see of Rochester, and next to that of London. Highly respected by all his brethren, he was perhaps more churchly than the rest, and had quarrelled with Hooper about the vestments, though in prison these worthies met in cordial reconciliation. The same boding presentiment which some think they see in the portraits of the first Charles casts a shade of sadness over the noble features of this martyr. It is reported that, in a storm at sea, he called to the sailors, "Keep up your hearts and ply your oars, for this boat carries a bishop who is destined not to be drowned but burned." The high principle which guided him appears in

another incident. Previous to the accession of Mary, Ridley offered, as bishop of London, to preach before her in an adjoining chapel. Mary scowled at this proposal. "Madam," said Ridley, "in virtue of mine office and calling, I am bound to make your grace this offer." "Well," replied the princess pettishly, "if there be no remedy, this it shall be: the door of the church is open for you, and you may preach if ye list; but neither I nor any of mine shall hear you." "Madam, I trust you will not refuse to hear God's word." "I cannot tell what ye call God's word," said Mary; "that is not God's word now that was God's word in my father's days." "God's word is one at all times," replied the bishop solemnly; "but it hath been better understood and practised in some ages than in others." "You durst not for your ears have avouched that for God's word in my father's days that now ye do," cried the princess; "and as for your new books, I thank God I have never read any of them; I never did, and never shall. And for your offering to preach before me, I thank you never a whit." The bishop retired from her presence deeply grieved. He was invited by the lord-in-waiting to partake of some refreshment before leaving the house; but suddenly he rose from the table, saying, "Surely I have done amiss." "Why?" he was asked. "Because," said he, "I have eaten and drunk in that place where God's word being offered hath been refused; whereas I ought to have departed instantly,

and shaken the dust from my shoes for a testimony against this house." Between persons actuated by such opposite principles, it was obvious that, if they should ever come into conflict, the collision would be fatal. Ridley's sermon during the brief reign of Lady Jane Grey, in which he warned his hearers against the dangers in the event of Mary's accession, sealed his doom. He was immediately thrown into prison.

Hugh Latimer, bishop of Worcester, was, in natural character, the very reverse of his fellow-sufferer. If Ridley was stately and dignified, Latimer was simple and homely. "God wot," says Ridley, "I am no orator, nor have I learned rhetoric to set colours on the matter;"* Latimer overflowed with imagery and eloquence. Ridley was always grave, judicious; Latimer could hardly restrain the sallies of his humour even in the pulpit. He boasted of being "the son of a husbandman of right good estimation." He was the most popular preacher of his time. The man who, even in Henry's reign, suffered some years' imprisonment for his outspoken honesty, and who, on being deprived of his bishopric, actually "skipped for joy," stood little chance of escape when he fell at last under the power of a queen whose temper, naturally sullen, had been soured by bigotry and dyspepsia, and came into the hands of churchmen whom he had long held up to ridicule and contempt. On passing Smithfield, where so many martyrs had suffered,

* Works of Ridley, p. 194 (Parker Soc. edit.)

he remarked, "Ah! this place hath long groaned for me." The old man was thrown into a damp cell in the Tower, where he suffered grievously from rheumatism. "Tell your master," he said to the jailer, "that if he does not look better after me, I will deceive him." "How so?" said the governor, alarmed at this message. "Yea, master lieutenant, I said so indeed," replied Latimer; "for you expect that I should burn; but unless you let me have some fire, I am more likely to starve here with cold."

The two martyrs were next conveyed to Oxford, on pretence of holding a disputation with the Romish doctors, but in reality as a mere cover to the injustice of the proceedings. They were treated as criminals, thrown into prison, and denied the use of books, pen, or paper. But to their mutual comfort, they were confined together in the same cell; and Ridley proposed that they might hold a conference with each other, in which he might personate the objectors, while Latimer would reply. "You are an old soldier," he said; "you must teach me to buckle on my armour." "Ah!" replied Latimer, "better a few things well pondered than to trouble the memory with too much matter. You shall prevail better with praying than with studying. For my part, I mean not to contend much with them, for it will not prevail. They will say, as their fathers said before them, 'We have a law, and by our law ye ought to die.'" This singular colloquy, however, went on, and, having been pre-

served, it furnishes one of the most interesting documents of the time. It is needless to add that both were condemned to suffer at the same stake. The sentence took effect October 16, 1555.

On being led to the place of execution, which was a ditch opposite Baliol College, Oxford, Ridley went first, in a black gown, velvet tippet, and corner cap. He was followed by Latimer, "in an old frieze gown, girded with a penny leathern girdle, on which hung his testament and spectacles without the case," as we generally see him portrayed. "Oh! be ye there?" said Ridley, looking back. "Yea," replied Latimer, halting with pain, but with all his wonted gaiety; "have after you as fast as I can follow." Ridley raised his eyes for a moment, and then, embracing his friend, he said, "Be of good heart, brother, for God will either assuage the fury of the flames, or else strengthen us to abide it." On approaching the stake, they both embraced it, and, kneeling down, engaged in earnest prayer. On rising, they were stripped and fastened by bolts to the stake. "Good fellow," said Ridley; "knock it in hard, for the flesh will have its course." Latimer's turn came next; and the sight of the old man, now eighty-five years of age, as he stood in his long shirt, surrounded by the fagots, with his long white beard streaming in the wind, sent a shudder through the spectators. Undaunted, however, by the fearful preparations, Latimer exclaimed, "Be of good comfort, brother Ridley, and play the man. We

shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England, as I trust shall never be put out." On the flames ascending, the aged martyr was soon suffocated. Ridley suffered terribly. "Let the fire come to me," he cried; "I cannot burn;" and at last, leaning towards the flames, he sank down at the feet of Latimer.

There wanted only another victim to complete the atrocious holocaust. Thomas Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, and beyond doubt the prime mover in the great work of reformation, could not be suffered to escape the doom of the heretic. In a moment of weakness, and yielding to the earnest importunities of his friends, as well as the hollow promises of the clergy, who held out to him the prospect of impunity, when they knew that the warrant for his execution had been made out, Cranmer had been tempted to sign a form of recantation of his principles.* Even this did not satisfy their malice. They insisted that he should read his abjuration in a public assembly, on the very morning of the day when it was determined to make him expiate his heresy in the flames! At

* We regret that Dr Hook should have adopted the reports of Cranmer's persecutors, that he signed no less than *seven* recantations. The martyr himself, in the immediate prospect of a bitter death, and with every sign of as bitter a repentance, spoke only of *one* act of recantation which he had subscribed—"the publishing of *that paper* contrary to the truth." That the base and unprincipled men about him were quite capable of forging his name as often as they chose, we can more easily believe than that he should have signed seven papers and only acknowledged one of them.

what time Cranmer discovered the cruel duplicity of his adversaries does not clearly appear. But that he did discover it some time before his execution is very apparent, and he made preparations accordingly for a public reparation of his offence. On that day, March 21, 1556, he was placed on an elevated seat in front of the pulpit, in order that all might hear him repeat his abjuration. There he sat, "the very image and shape of perfect sorrow." His whole deportment was quiet, grave, dignified, though tears, "like the tears of any child," dropped down abundantly "from his fatherly face." He knelt down beside a pillar, and engaged in silent prayer. An address was delivered by Dr Cole, who, as it was no longer possible to keep up the miserable delusion, exhorted the fallen archbishop to make confession of his true and undoubted profession of the catholic faith, and submit patiently to the penalty which awaited him. He knelt down, and, after a brief pause, the silence was broken by the deep tones of the archbishop as he offered up a fervent and impressive prayer. He then rose from his knees, and amidst the mute attention of the crowded audience, he spoke, in calm and firm, though tearful emotion, as follows:—"And now I come to the great thing that troubleth my conscience, more than anything I ever said or did in my life; and that is the publishing of that paper contrary to the truth—*which I now renounce and refuse*—as written with my hand contrary to the truth which I thought in

my heart, and written for fear of death and to save my life if it might be. Therefore, forasmuch as my hand offended, that hand shall first be punished; for if I come to the fire, it shall first be burned. And as for the pope, I refuse him as Christ's enemy and anti-christ, with all his false doctrine." Seldom has a confession been listened to with deeper or more conflicting emotions. Many in the assembly, who had only looked on him with pity, now wept for joy. His enemies, livid with rage, and stung to madness, hurried him with indecent haste to the stake. The fire was kindled, and, says Fox, "when it began to burn near him, stretching out his arm, he put his right hand into the flame, which he held so steadfast and immovable, that all men might see his hand burned to ashes before his body was touched. He seemed to stir no more than the stake to which he was bound; his eyes were lifted up, and oftentimes he repeated these words, '*This unworthy right hand;*' and using the words of Stephen, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,' in the greatness of the flame he gave up the ghost."

Thus fell, in the sixty-seventh year of his age, Thomas Cranmer, one whom honest Strype justly describes as "one of the holiest bishops and one of the best of men whom that age produced." The calumnies heaped upon his name by prejudice and faction have passed away, or can now only be revived by those who would inherit the infamy of his persecutors. The closing scene of his life more than com-

pensates for the single act of weakness to which he yielded in the hour of temptation, and for which, like St Peter, when he remembered the words of his Lord, none wept more bitterly than he. Like the same holy apostle, whom "another was to bind and carry him whither he would not," Cranmer, if tempted to disgrace himself, may be truly said, by the manner of his death, to have "glorified God." He died for the religion which he had professed and done so much to promote during life; and though his enemies induced him, with their daggers at his throat, for a moment to renounce it, at the same time, to their own disgrace and discomfiture, they forced upon him the crown of martyrdom.*

The bells of Oxford which summoned the crowd to witness the bloody sacrifice may be said to have rung the death-knell of popery in England. It is seldom that two characters more thoroughly detested have been placed in the pillory of modern history than Philip and Mary. In the former we see a revolting combination of lust, bigotry, and cruelty; we behold a tyrant gloomy and saturnine, who was never seen to smile, and who converted the merry plains of Flanders into a sea of blood, consigning "the whole nation," with few exceptions, to be burned as heretics—with only this hope of mercy, that, upon

* Dr Hook denies him this honour, and says, "We pity the unfortunate Cranmer, *but still we regard him as entirely disgraced.*" Indeed! St Peter, no doubt, felt that he had disgraced himself; but still we hardly regard him as "entirely disgraced." (Lives of the Archbishops, ii. 405.)

recantation, the men might be beheaded and the women buried alive.* The latter, who has been indelibly branded with the name of "bloody Mary," has only one claim on our compassion, that she should have been united to such a hateful husband. The death of this unlovely and unlamented queen, in November 1558, relieved the nation as from the throes of a deadly distemper. The people, recovering from their panic, began to count up the victims who had suffered during the brief period of her reign. At that time, when news spread slowly, and the press seldom ventured to state a fact or opinion obnoxious to the rulers, it was some time before the whole truth could be ascertained. In one statement, certified by Lord Burleigh, it is said—"Four hundred persons suffered publicly in Queen Mary's days, besides those secretly murdered in prison. Of these, twenty were bishops or dignified clergymen; sixty were women; children more than forty; some women with child; one bore a child in the fire, and the child was burned." According to Fox, the number of public executions for alleged heresy was two hundred and eighty-four. But Bishop Burnet sets down the number of cruel deaths for religion at *eight hundred*.† Bishops Gardiner and Bonner, the main agents in these scenes of cruelty, did not long survive their victims. Stephen Gardiner,

* Schiller's *Hist. of Revolt of the Netherlands*; Motley's *Dutch Republic*, vol. i. p. 262; Prescott's *Hist. of Philip II.*, vol. ii. p. 187.

† Burnet's *Hist. of Reformation*, vol. ii. p. 572; vol. iii. p. 387.

usually called "wily Gardiner," was a man of some parts, but of unsettled principles, having veered round several times. Cringing to all above him, and overbearing to all beneath him, he is a specimen of a man whom overweening vanity will drive, when in power, to the grossest cruelties. He died within a short month after the martyrdom of Ridley and Latimer.* Edmund Bonner, usually called "bloody Bonner," survived to present himself at the court of Queen Elizabeth; but that princess, while she received the other popish bishops with respect, turned from Bonner with disgust, saying she could not abide the presence of a man so tainted with blood. Burnet remarks on the cruelties of this period, "They raised such a horror in the whole nation, and such abhorrence of that religion, that it is no wonder an aversion so deeply rooted does, upon every new provocation or jealousy of returning to it, break out in the most violent and convulsive symptoms." And on this it has been observed, with equal truth and historical judgment, that "those who would diminish that aversion and prevent these convulsive symptoms, will do better by avoiding for the future either such panyrics on Mary and her advisers, or such insidious

* Tradition reports that his dying agonies vied in horror with any he ever inflicted. Nothing reflects more credit on the trustworthiness of Fox in his "Martyrology" than his abstaining from all reference to such reports. "All this I leave to the knowledge of those who know it better. Whatever he was, he is now gone, and I refer him to his Judge."—*Acts and Monuments*, book xi.

extenuations of her persecutions, as we have lately read, and which do not raise a favourable impression of their sincerity in the principles of toleration by which they profess to have been converted." *

Our claim to regard the martyr-bishops of England as our brethren will not be disputed by those admirers of mediævalism who will hardly acknowledge them as representatives of the church of England. But it is not upon minor points of church order that we advance the claim, as it was not for such points that they died. We regard them as bearing witness to the saving truths of the christian faith, and as shedding their blood in the same cause with the Huguenots of France under the Guises, and the presbyterians of the Netherlands under the atrocious Philip.

“ Hast thou admitted, with a blind fond trust,
The lie that burned thy fathers' bones to dust,
That first adjudged them heretics, then sent
Their souls to heaven, and cursed them as they went ?

Shame on the candour and the gracious smile
Bestowed on them that light the martyr's pile ;
While insolent disdain, in frowns exprest,
Attends the tenets that endured the test !”

COWPER's *Expostulation*, 1st Edit.†

* Hallam's Constitutional Hist. of England, vol. i. p. 106.

† See Note A. to this chapter.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III.

NOTE A.

Cowper's Cancelled Lines in his "Expostulation."

Dr Southey, in his edition of Cowper's Life and Works (vol. viii. p. 196), says in a foot-note, "It is proper to insert here, from the first edition ('Expostulation') a remarkable passage, for which the next paragraph was substituted in the second and all subsequent ones." He then subjoins the passage, consisting of twenty-four lines, part of which we have quoted at the close of this chapter; and he adds—"Cowper no doubt withdrew this striking passage in consequence of his having become intimate with the amiable family at Weston Hall." Whatever truth there may be in this conjecture, and whatever may have induced him to exclude the lines in question from the editions subsequent to the first (whether from being disinclined to hurt the feelings of his popish friends the Throckmortons, or from yielding, as he often did, to the suggestion of others), the lines are too remarkable and too appropriate to be lost.

NOTE B.

Charges for the Martyr-Bishops at Oxford.

The following doleful memorial of the times, evidently the production of the jailer or bailiff of Oxford, has recently turned up among the papers of the British Museum, as if to prove the bitter reality of the scenes recorded in this chapter, which modern civilisation can hardly believe to have been possible :—

Charge for the joint diet, dinner and supper, for Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley :—

1st October 1555.

	£	s.	d.
Bread and ale,	0	0	2
Oysters,	0	0	1
Butter,	0	0	2
Eggs,	0	0	2
Lyng,	0	0	8
Piece of fresh salmon,	0	0	10
Wine,	0	0	3
Cheese and pears,	0	0	2

Total, three dinners, 0 2 6

Charge for the burning of the bodies of Latimer and Ridley :—

For 3 loads wood faggots to burn Latimer and Ridley,	£	s.	d.
Item, 1 load furze faggots,	0	12	0
Item, for carriage,	0	3	4
Item, a post,	0	2	6
Item, a post,	0	1	4
Item, 2 chains,	0	3	4
Item, 2 staples,	0	0	6
Item, 4 labourers,	0	2	8

Total, 1 5 8

CHAPTER IV.

ENGLISH PRESBYTERY WITHIN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

A.D. 1558-1625.

"But be not ye called Rabbi ; for one is your Master, even Christ,
and all ye are brethren."

St Matthew xxiii. 8.

"HERE IS SUPERIORITY WITHOUT TYRANNY, PARITY WITHOUT
CONFUSION, AND SUBJECTION WITHOUT SLAVERY."

"Order and Government of the Church of Scotland,"
By ALEXANDER HENDERSON, 1641.

CHAPTER IV.

English Presbytery within the Church of England—The Order of Wandsworth—Miles Coverdale—John Fox—Thomas Cartwright—Hampton Court Conference.

THE accession of Elizabeth, November 17, 1558, was hailed throughout England with universal acclamation. At her coronation, she made her progress through London along streets adorned with tapestry and cloth of gold, while the air was rent with the ringing of bells, the flourishing of trumpets, and the shouts of a rejoicing people. Amid the other pageants was one representing Father Time, conducting his daughter, a young damsel in white silk, and carrying a Bible, with the inscription, "The Word of Truth." On this significant emblem being presented to her, the princess warmly embraced it, "declaring that this should be the rule of her government." That Elizabeth was favourable to the Reformation cannot be questioned. The daughter of Anne Boleyn had firmly withstood all attempts to gain her over to the profession of the Romish faith, and she only escaped from the doom of heresy by maintaining a discreet silence. She disliked, Burnet tells us, the title of "Supreme Head of the Church," preferring that of "Supreme Governor

of the Church of England." Unhappily, however, it soon became manifest that she claimed, under this less ambitious designation, all the spiritual authority exercised by Henry VIII. She soon began to evince a tendency to repress all attempts at further reformation of the church. When the protestants, creeping out of their hiding-places, and returning in large numbers from abroad, began to pull down popish images, and everything reminding them of the hateful idolatry from which they had escaped, and to set up King Edward's liturgy in the churches, the queen issued a proclamation against all such innovations, declaring that, while she sanctioned the use of English in the service, and forbade the elevation of the host, she advised her faithful subjects to follow her example until it should be otherwise ordered by parliament. She herself retained in her private chapel, an altar, crucifix, and various Romish symbols. Indeed, it became apparent that, had her claims been recognised by the Romish church, she might not have proved unwilling to acknowledge the pope as the father of Christendom. In the good providence of God this was prevented. Elizabeth sent a respectful message to Pope Pius IV., through the official agent of her late sister, announcing her accession to the throne; but the haughty pontiff replied, that England belonged of right to the Holy See; that Elizabeth, as being illegitimate, had no right to the throne without his consent; and that only on the ground of renouncing

her pretensions, and submitting the question wholly to him, would he take up her cause. As a woman, Elizabeth resented this insult; and as a queen, she spurned at the humiliation. One thing only was wanting to make the breach irreparable. The Romish clergy, many of whom held benefices, joined with the pope in repudiating her claims; some of them even spoke of transferring their allegiance to Mary Queen of Scots. The die was cast, and England was severed from Rome.

Never was there a better opportunity to carry into effect those measures of reform demanded by the state of the English church. The leading dignitaries, such as Parker, Grindal, and Parkhurst, were decidedly in favour of a nearer affinity in worship and polity to other reformed churches. When Calvin, through Archbishop Parker, renewed his application to Elizabeth to "summon a general assembly, wherein a set form and method of public service and church government might be established, not only within her dominions, but among all the reformed and evangelical churches abroad," the archbishop cordially assented to the proposal, providing only that the church of England might retain her episcopate, "*not as from Pope Gregory, who sent over Augustine the monk hither, but from Joseph of Arimathea.*"* But unfortunately the queen adopted a line of policy precisely the reverse, and, inheriting the temper of her father,

* Strype's *Life of Parker*, p. 70.

carried all before her. Her object was to effect a sort of compromise with the Romish church, and thus gain over her Roman Catholic subjects. With this view, she put an embargo upon preaching, or "prophesying" as it was called. Two or three preachers, she held, were quite enough for a whole county; and the curates should content themselves with reading the Homilies. On the other hand, she insisted on the most rigorous observance of the rites and rubrics of the church. The liturgy, after being stripped of some phrases likely to prove offensive to the ears of Romanists, and brought into closer affinity to the popish missal,* was fixed down by parliamentary statute. In June 1559 was passed the famous "Act of uniformity of common prayer and service in the church." This act, at once a blot and a blunder in the otherwise prosperous reign of Elizabeth, remains to this day the fruitful mother of all the discontent within, and all the dissenterism outside, the church of England. It stereotyped the church, as it stood at a period when, instead of being brought more into harmony with the other protestant churches, as its founders desired, it was suspended midway between

* Thus, the lityny in King Edward's book of 1551, "From the tyranny of the bishop of Rome, and all his detestable enormities, good Lord, deliver us," was expunged. Instead of the simple communion service, "Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee," were added the words, "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life." At the same time, for the Lord's table was substituted an altar, and the term "prieat" was used for presbyter.

Romanism and the Reformation, merely to serve political ends, and the pleasure of an arbitrary sovereign. And the consequence has been that, while England has been progressing as a nation, in religious thought and liberty, she still presents the strange anomaly of a free parliament and an enslaved church.

Armed with the statutes of uniformity and of supremacy, Elizabeth proceeded to enforce them in spite of all counsel or remonstrance. Few who had known her as the meek maiden whom Edward used to call "my sweet sister Temperance," would have recognised her in the imperious queen who, when thwarted in her measures, would threaten to "unfrock" her bishops; who issued her "Injunctions" containing no less than fifty articles; and who, in virtue of her court of High Commission, sentenced, in the course of a few years, many of the wisest and holiest men of the church to suspension, deprivation of their livings, and grievous imprisonments. Every attempt to interfere in behalf of these persecuted divines was sure to provoke the vengeance of the queen, who seems to have regarded the church as her private patrimony, and its ministers as her domestic servants. When parliament would have passed measures of relief, she snatched the bills out of their hands; and two of their number, for having moved them, Mr Mainwaring and Mr Wentworth, were committed to the Tower as traitors. Even good Archbishop Grindal, for having presumed to tell her majesty that "she ought to be less peremptory in

matters of religion, and to leave them to a council of grave bishops and divines," was, by order of her Star Chamber, confined to his own house, and suspended for six months, as a salutary warning to the whole episcopal bench. The common people were allowed no greater liberty. By repeated proclamations, they were compelled to attend divine service, and their absence from church was held to infer the penalties of high treason. In vain did the general assembly of the Scottish church petition Elizabeth in behalf of these nonconformists. In vain did King James of Scotland plead for them in letters to his "beloved sister." In vain did Burleigh and Walsingham venture to urge a word in their favour.

This obstinacy of the queen seems at first sight unaccountably inconsistent with her general character. She had taken an active part in assisting the protestants of France and Scotland in their struggles for religious liberty; and, what is more strange, not only afforded the natives of foreign parts an asylum in her dominions, but permitted them to practise their religious rites as at home. But we fear that Elizabeth was not troubled with scruples of conscience herself, and was hardly able to appreciate the force of conscience in others. To the papists, she said she was surprised they could not go to her church and keep their own religion in their pockets. On the other hand, she astonished the Dutch ambassadors by asking, "Why make such ado about the mass? Can't you attend it

as you would do a play? I have got on a white gown now; suppose I should begin to act the mass-priest, would you think yourselves obliged to run away?"* With such views, she could ascribe the conscientious scruples of the nonconformists only to bad humour or factious opposition to her sovereign authority. "So absolute was the authority of the crown at that time," says Hume, "that the precious spark of liberty had been kindled and was preserved by the puritans alone; and it is to this sect that the English owe the whole freedom of their constitution."† The demands made by the dissentients were not fitted to assuage her majesty's displeasure. Of these there were two classes, the one practical in their views, the other more theoretical and organic. The former dealt mainly with the vestments of the clergy, the use of cope and surplice, the sign of cross in baptism, and kneeling at the communion. These, being obvious to the senses, and services in which they all were required to participate, were mainly obnoxious to the common people. The white surplice was the garb in which they had been accustomed to see the Romish priests officiating at mass and other idolatrous rites; and the attitude of kneeling at the sacrament recalled the adoration of

* A striking confirmation of the view here taken of Elizabeth's character occurs in her proclamation of 1569, in which, after stating that her majesty would "not molest any for matters of conscience," she adds, "so long as they *outwardly conform to the laws of the realm, which enforce frequentation of divine service in the ordinary churches.*"

† Hume's England—Elizabeth.

the host or bodily presence of the Saviour. Questions about church polity lay too deep for general comprehension ; but all could see the difference between a black and a white gown, and mark the sign of the cross in baptism or the ring in marriage. Such nonconformists, when brought up before the bishops, treated them with little ceremony, calling them "popes" and "antichrists," and describing their robes as "the conjuring garments of the mass-priests."* Hunted and brought to bay by incessant prosecutions, offended at the laxity of the queen in allowing Sunday-pastimes, while so rigorous in enforcing postures in church, the ruder sort of puritans seem to have assumed at this time that moroseness which clung to them as a party for more than a hundred years. Moreover, as if in direct antagonism to the royal will, they were as strict in the observance of the holy sabbath as they were careless about church holydays, and decidedly more afraid to disobey the Ten Commandments than her majesty's Fifty Injunctions.

But besides this popular party, there was another class of nonconformists more influential in the state, and more fitted to create alarm in the church. These were the clergy who were dissatisfied not only with the outward rites, but with the constitution of the church. The strength of this party may be estimated, when we consider that it is computed that during the reign of Elizabeth the number of those suspended,

* Strype's Grindal, p. 118.

silenced, or deprived for nonconformity, "comprehended a third of all the ecclesiastics in the kingdom." To this must be added a much larger number who remained in their charges, ill at ease, and sighing after a more thorough reform.

The demands of this party may be briefly summed up as the following :—That the names and functions of archbishops, bishops, deans, and other officials, ought to be abolished ; that there ought to be a perfect parity in respect of office among the ministers of the church, there being no superiority above the office of a teaching presbyter ; that the election of ministers should be restored to the christian people, and no longer assumed by the episcopal office ; that there should be no restriction to fixed forms of prayer ; that the sacraments should never be administered without the preaching of the word ; that the parents were the only true sponsors in baptism ; that there is no warrant for the office of episcopal confirmation ; that the government of the church should be placed in the hands of presbyteries, synods, and national assemblies ; that all pluralities and non-residence should be condemned. In fine, they pleaded for a stricter administration of discipline, for a more equitable distribution of church emoluments, for a reformation of the liturgy, and for a working clergy. These were generally young clergymen, high in spirit and culture, who had studied the subject of church government, and who, having in many cases been personally con-

versant with the foreign churches, sighed for a more thorough reformation of the church at home. They were warmly supported by many of the nobility, at the head of whom they had a powerful patron in the Earl of Leicester.

At first this party refrained from any public demonstration of their views ; but when Archbishop Parker began to urge subscription on the clergy of the diocese of London, and after the Queen's proclamation appeared in 1569 enforcing conformity, they found themselves constrained to make an appeal to parliament. This was presented in 1572, under the title of "An admonition to parliament for the reformation of church discipline." In this document, which was subscribed in the name of their brethren by Mr John Field and Mr Thomas Wilcox, they dilated in somewhat sharp terms on the corruption and tyranny of the bishops, and concluded with a petition to both houses that a form of government more agreeable to scripture and the example of other reformed churches might be substituted for the hierarchy, and established by law. The result of this appeal might have been foretold. Field and Wilcox were instantly committed to Newgate, where they continued for more than a year in close confinement and sore trouble. Undismayed by this treatment, Mr Thomas Cartwright, who stood at the head of the party, published a "Second Admonition, with a humble petition to both houses of parliament for relief against subscription." Mean-

while, the celebrated Dr Whitgift, afterwards archbishop of Canterbury, published an answer to the first admonition. This elicited a reply to Dr Whitgift from Cartwright, which was so highly admired for its point and learning, that the doctor was obliged to return to the combat with a second reply. But the indomitable presbyter answered this reply, and thus had the last word in the controversy.* The conflict was one in which the disputants could not possibly agree so long as they differed on the standard of judgment, one appealing to scripture alone, the other to scripture as interpreted by the fathers. Both parties applied to the reformers on the continent, and both boasted, with some show of reason, of having their support. On the one hand, the presbyterians referred to the constitution of the foreign churches as entirely in their favour. On the other hand, the bishops appealed to Calvin, Beza, Bullinger, and Gualter, who, in replying to their representations, spoke unfavourably regarding the scruples of the nonconformists.† But these good bishops concealed from their foreign correspondents the true source of all the mischief, which lay in the tyrannical enforcement of their ceremonies alike on ministers and people; while the continental

* Fuller is wrong in saying that Whitgift had the last word (Church Hist., ii. b. ix.) Cartwright published "The Rest of the Second Reply to Dr Whitgift" when abroad in 1577 (Strype's Whitgift, b. i. p. 68). In this last reply he dwells chiefly on the faults of the Book of Common Prayer.

† Zurich Letters, 2d ser., Rodolph Gualter to Bishop Cox, p. 227.

divines were ill fitted to act as umpires in the quarrel, having no personal experience of a semi-reformed establishment, with an imperious monarch at the head of it, and Fifty Injunctions pressing down upon them. Each party charged the other, not without reason on both sides, with the use of spiteful and intemperate language ; and while Cartwright was smarting under a sense of injustice, and his opponent was basking in the sunshine of royal favour, how could the debate be sustained without some symptoms of asperity on the one side and of superciliousness on the other? It must be allowed that Cartwright's style largely partakes of the rough plain-speaking which characterised religious controversy in that age ; yet none, except partisans, can fail to admire the lofty tone of the reformer, who, conscious of the goodness of his cause, "never feared lest truth should come too often into the field ; for although," he says, "through the poverty of her defenders, she come never so naked and unarmed, yet the Lord hath set such a majesty in her countenance, as with one of her eyes she has ravished those desirous of truth, and with the other she hath so astonished her enemies as if they were cast into a dead sleep." Whitgift did all in his power as the champion of the episcopacy ; and, truth to say, boldly received in his own person the shafts which ought to have been in justice, but could not from courtesy, be aimed at his royal mistress.

The correspondence of the bishops at this period

abounds with complaints of the new reformers. They are represented as fomenting strife in the church, and aiming at a general confusion in the commonwealth. "New orators," says Bishop Sandys to Bullinger, "are rising up from among us,—foolish young men, who, while they despise authority, and admit of no superior, are seeking the complete overthrow and rooting up of our whole ecclesiastical polity, so piously constituted and confirmed, and established by the entire consent of most excellent men, and are striving to shape out for us I know not what new platform of a church. And you would not imagine with what approbation this new face of things is regarded as well by the people as the nobility. The people are fond of change, and seek after liberty; the nobility for what is useful. These good folks promise both, and that in abundance."*

The "Admonition to parliament" has met with as little favour from later writers as it did from the Queen's bishops. Some dislike the very title as savouring of presumption; † others have censured it for demanding a parliamentary establishment of the new discipline by law, in the event of which it has been shrewdly surmised that the presbyterians would have

* Zurich Letters, 1st ser. p. 295.

† It is hardly necessary to remark, that the word "admonition" is often used in old English, as in the Latin, for "suggestion" or "proposal." An "admonition to the gentle reader" often stands in books of that period for what we call a "preface" or an "advertisement."

enforced it by persecuting statutes.* It might have been fairly inferred, that men who were in these very petitions "praying for relief against subscription" to religious tests and canons, were not likely to enforce subscription to their own. John Fox, when selected, for his eminent piety and learning, as the first called upon to subscribe the articles prescribed by Parker, instantly pulled out a Greek testament from his pocket, saying "*To this I will subscribe.*" And indeed, as we may afterwards see, if the English presbyterians went too far in any point, it was in their uniform dislike to the subscription of religious creeds. But in truth, all that these good men aimed at by petitioning for a parliamentary sanction to their discipline was, to indicate that they had no wish to introduce it in defiance of the law of the land. Their grave offence in the eyes of Elizabeth was, that they should have appealed to parliament at all instead of submitting the question to her own good pleasure as supreme governor of the church; and it is curious to mark that Richard Bancroft, their mortal enemy, regards their appeal to law as a mere pretext to show that they were the friends of peace and good order.†

Thus driven back from the doors of parliament, molested by enforced subscriptions, and yet averse to disturb the public peace of the realm, the brethren

* Peirce's *Vindication of Dissenters*, part i. p. 84; Marsden's *Early Puritana*.

† Bancroft's *English Scottizing for Discipline*, ch. iii. pp. 46, 95, 100.

endeavoured to gain their object in a more private way, by meeting for mutual consultation. Accordingly, on November 20, 1572, at a time when all England must have been trembling at the news of the atrocious massacre of St Bartholomew in Paris, several of them held a meeting at Wandsworth, in Surrey, then a retired village on the Thames, about five miles from London. The meeting was small, but it included "some of the brightest lights and the best theologians of the age." Among these were Thomas Cartwright, Walter Travers, Dudley Fenner, Stephen Egerton, and other clergymen, together with eleven laymen. They met simply for conference, and they came to the conclusion, that "since they could not have the word preached nor the sacraments administered without *idolatrous gear*, they should draw up some outline of discipline, according to which they might, as opportunity offered, worship God in a manner that would not offend against the light of their consciences. This has been called THE FIRST PRESBYTERY set up in England. To this designation it is hardly entitled. There was no formal constitution or organisation of a church court—no separate congregations were gathered from the parishes—no chapels erected for nonconformist worship. In other respects, however, it might be so called. It was virtually, though not formally, a meeting of presbytery. It was the first time that an attempt was made to associate those holding presbyterian principles in

the English church in mutual conference. It was the first endeavour made to unite them under the banner of presbyterial discipline. And although no minutes of their meetings have been preserved, it is certain that some general outline of discipline was drawn up, and privately subscribed by the members, in pledge of mutual agreement. Unhappily, the only source of information in regard to their proceedings is the one-sided treatise of Bishop Bancroft known as "English Scottizing for Discipline," a work got up chiefly from the depositions of spies and informers before the Star Chamber, and intended to incite government against the presbyterians.* He says—"Presently after the same parliament, viz., the 20th of November 1572, there was a presbytery erected at Wandsworth in Surrey, as it appeareth by a bill endorsed with Mr Field's hand thus, 'The Order of Wandsworth,' in which order the elders' names—eleven of them are mentioned—their offices, and certain general rules then given them to be observed, were likewise agreed upon and subscribed." From his informations, it would appear that "The Discipline" had been subscribed in various parts of England, particularly in

* The general title of this curious treatise is, "Dangerous Positions and Proceedings published and practised within this Iland of Britane, under pretence of Reformation, and for the Presbyteriall Discipline. Collected and set forth by Richard Bancroft, D.D., then Lord Bishop of London, and afterwards Lord Archbishop of Canterbury."

London, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire, Suffolk, Norfolk, and Essex. The names of Cartwright, Travers, Field, Wilcox, Penry, Charke, Egerton, Snape, Gellibrand, frequently appear in the treatise. But there is no evidence that either at Wandsworth or elsewhere during this reign there was anything resembling the election and organisation which are essential to the working of presbytery.*

Dr Heylin gives a few additional facts, but obviously borrows his information from Bancroft. He says—"About this time, Clark, (Charke?) Travers, Gardiner, Barber, Cheston, and lastly, Croke and Egerton, joined themselves to the brotherhood. Amongst whom, the handling of such points as concerned the discipline became very frequent, many motions being made, and some conclusions settled, in pursuance of it; but more particularly it was resolved upon the question, 'That forasmuch as divers books had been written, and sundry petitions exhibited to

* Another curious trait is noticed, indicating the origin of a practice afterwards adopted pretty largely, and peculiar to English nonconformists. Among the rules adopted at Wandsworth, Bancroft quotes one: "Let persuasions be used that such names as do savour either of paganism or popery be not given to children at their baptism, but principally those whereof there are examples in the scriptures." He then gives a story about a child whom the minister refused to baptize by the name of Richard. But we suspect he goes too far when he adds, "This is sundry ways apparent; for whence do these new names and fancies proceed, *The-Lord-is-near, More-triall, Reformation, Discipline, Joy-again, Dust, &c.*" He speaks of their opening their meetings with "conceived prayer," their repudiating private baptism, and baptism by women, godfathers and godmothers, &c.

her majesty, the parliament, and their lordships, to little purpose, every man should therefore labour, by all means possible, to bring the reformation into the church.' It was also then and there resolved, 'That for the better bringing in of the said holy discipline, they should only, as well publicly as privately, teach it but by little and little, as well as possibly they might draw the same into practice.' According to which resolution a presbytery was erected, on the 20th of November, at a small village in Surrey called Wandsworth, where Field had the incumbency or care of souls; a place conveniently situate for the London brethren, as standing near the bank of the Thames, but four miles from the city, and more retired and out of sight than any of their own churches about the town. This first establishment they indorsed by the name of 'The Orders of Wandsworth,' in which the elders' names are agreed on, the manner of the election declared, the approvers of them mentioned, their offices agreed on also and described." * Such is the account given by a writer who was deeply imbued with prejudice, and indeed avowedly hostile to the presbyterians.

Some curious particulars may be gathered from Bancroft's tract. Thus it appears that the title "moderator" was given to the president, and the term "classis" to the presbytery; while it was proposed that the church should be divided into synods

* Heylin's Hist. of the Presbyterians, b. vii. p. 273.

provincial and national. The author is very indignant at Cartwright for having declared that "they who reject this discipline, refuse to have Christ to reign over them." "Ridiculous men and bewitched!" he exclaims; "as though Christ's kingdom was nowhere to be found but where half-a-dozen artisans, shoemakers, tailors, and tinkers, with their preacher and reader (eight or nine cherubims forsooth!) do rule the whole parish."* Such is a specimen of the work, plainly the offspring of strong prejudice, but betraying on the side of the dignified clergy, under the language of contempt, no small alarm at the progress of the new discipline, which threatened to supplant a lordly and expensive hierarchy. It was this book that brought down upon its author the castigation of Andrew Melville, when summoned, in 1607, before King James and his council. On that occasion Bancroft charged Melville with treason, upon which the intrepid Scottish reformer stepped up to the council table, and shaking him by the lawn-sleeves, which he called "Romish rags," addressed him as follows:—"If you are the author of the book called 'English Scottizing for Discipline,' then I regard you as the capital enemy of all the reformed churches in Europe, and as such I will profess myself an enemy to you and your proceedings to the effusion of the last drop of my blood; and it grieves me to think that such a man should

* Bancroft's English Scottizing for Discipline, pp. 44, 104.

have his majesty's ear, and sit so high in this honourable council."*

"The Order of Wandsworth," to which Bancroft and Heylin refer, is an interesting document, and well worthy of republication. It was published in London, in the year 1644, when the book of common prayer was abolished by act of parliament, under the title of "A directory of government contended for, and, as far as the time would suffer, practised, by the first nonconformists in the days of Queen Elizabeth." It seems to have been originally written in Latin, and subscribed privately, though not published, as a bond of mutual union and agreement. But as the presbyterian ministers at this period are frequently described as having "subscribed the discipline," we are inclined to think that, in some form or other, it must have been this book that was subscribed, probably that very copy afterwards "found in the study of that accomplished divine, Thomas Cartwright." The secrecy with which they found it necessary to conduct all their proceedings, renders it difficult to define their position. The bishops were as anxious as we can now be to ascertain it. But though they closely questioned Cartwright as to where and when they met, what they subscribed, and what they practised, he seems to have kept them very much in the dark.

But the most complete account of presbyterian principles at this period is that written by the cele-

* M'Crie's *Life of Melville*, vol. ii. p. 159.

brated Walter Travers, entitled *De Disciplina Ecclesiastica*. The treatise of Travers is rather a vindication of presbyterian government than a directory for its practice.* The phraseology by which the different offices are expressed resembles that employed in the Scottish and Genevan churches. They are divided into ministers, doctors, elders, and deacons. The duties and qualifications of these are pointed out; and they were to be chosen by popular election. The whole is written in a high tone of conscious superiority. The author strongly inveighs against the pomp and ambition of the prelates, "imitating with their crosiers the sceptres, and with their mitres the crowns of princes." He protests against pluralities, non-residence, and impropriation of church revenues. At the same time he advocates a liberal maintenance of the working clergy, and even the continuance of tithes. He ardently contends for a learned ministry, and for the secular and religious education of the people. Her majesty is treated with profound respect, her bishops with less ceremony, and the Anglican ritual with indignant reprobation. "Would God," he exclaims, "that we had suffered the papists, when they were cast out, to have gone away with bag and baggage, and that we had not had so great a desire to be enriched with their spoils. This is not, believe me, to be enriched with the jewels of the Egyptians, but to be infested with their boils and sores. Those ear-rings and Egyptian orna-

* See note to this chapter on Travers' Ecclesiastical Discipline and the Orders of Wandsworth.

ments which we have gotten are fitter to make a golden calf with than to adorn and beautify the tabernacle of God."

From these treatises, and from various conferences and examinations, two points of divergence between the English reformers and their opponents come strongly out. First, there is the different aspect in which the two parties viewed the church of Rome. By the conformists it was regarded as still a true church of Christ, though chargeable with manifold corruptions; by the nonconformists it was believed to be the antichrist of scripture,—a view which imparted to everything identified with it the character of idolatry and apostasy. The other point referred to divine worship, in regard to which the conforming clergy held that what was *unforbidden* in scripture might be treated as indifferent; while the nonconforming ministers contended that what was *unbidden* in scripture must be rejected. The practices flowing from these root-principles rendered the parties adhering to them mutually irreconcilable. "We cannot subscribe to the book of common prayer," said the one party, "because it alloweth a mere reading and insufficient ministry; and, what is still more intolerable, it containeth many things tending to harden obstinate papists, and to encourage ignorance and superstition among the common people. All this is apparent, seeing most of the things contained in the book are translated out of the popish portuis (breviary) with little or no alteration. We cannot consent that cer-

tain parts of the apocrypha should be used in public worship, and some parts of the scriptures omitted. In the burial of the dead, every wicked man must be committed to the ground in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life. The book maketh confirmation, cross in baptism, and matrimony to be sacraments.”* To the surplice they objected that Christ had appointed no “holy garments” to be used by ministers in his service; while kneeling at the communion was to be disallowed, as clearly flowing from the adoration of the host under popery. To these scruples the strongest answer that could be advanced by the friends of the establishment was the authority of the Queen; and as the presbyterians allowed, in one sense, her supremacy, they were reduced to considerable difficulty in maintaining their position. They argued that princes had no spiritual power, and that though supreme in all causes, ecclesiastical as well as civil, they did not act *ecclesiastically*; that to devise rites and ceremonies for the church was not the prince’s vocation, but only to receive and allow such as the scriptures command, and such as the bishops and pastors, in council assembled, shall advise. They held, in short, that the province of temporal princes was not to devise or direct things ecclesiastical, but to sanction and establish what might be enacted by the church agreeably to the word of God.†

* Brooks’ Puritans, ii. 289.

† This summary of their views is drawn from a variety of publications issued at this time, such as “A Defence of the Godly Ministers

Such distinctions, however, were too profound to be apprehended, or too much in harmony with constitutional law, to be of much service to the presbyterians. The Queen cut them all through with the sword of arbitrary rule. The low policy of her advisers was to misrepresent the principles of these good men, and propagate against them all kinds of slander. They were classed with traitors, rebels, disturbers of the peace, and fanatical innovators. Robert Browne had begun, about 1581, to broach his peculiar views, and several of his followers, called Brownists, adopted the most extreme opinions, which might be said to exhibit those of the English reformers in caricature.* They bore more likeness to the modern "Plymouth brethren." Bishops they styled "antichrists;" all forms of church government bore "the mark of the beast;" all congregations except those they had "gathered to Christ" were profane communions; and any member of their flocks had "equal power according to the word of God to censure the pastors as the pastors had to censure them."† To such distortions of their principles and

against the Slanders of Dr Bridges," by Dudley Fenner, a learned divine, in 1587; "True Difference between Christian Submission and Unchristian Rebellion," by Dr Bilson, p. 243; "Certaine Demandes, with their grounds, drawn out of Holy Writ, and propounded by some religious Gentlemen, unto the Reverend Father, Richard, Archbishop of Canterbury," &c., 1605.

* Browne ultimately conformed to the establishment. "No 'Independent' will take it well at any man's hand to be called a 'Brownist.'" —*Hanbury's Memorials of Independents*, vol. iii. p. 132.

† A Collection of Certain Letters and Conferences lately passed betwixt certain Preachers and two Prisouers in the Fleet, 1690.

misrepresentations of their intentions, the presbyterian clergy were obliged to submit with patience; for to appear openly in self-defence would have been to forfeit their livings, to abandon their charges, and to choose between exile and imprisonment.

Thus, for seventy years before the Westminster Assembly gave it shape, or the Long Parliament set it up, presbytery, it appears, had taken deep root in the convictions of the serious and learned portion of the English clergy; and during all this period, though no separation took place between the conformists and non-conformists, the two children may be said to have struggled within the womb of their common mother. The circumstances of the time furnish ample grounds to explain, if not to justify, the somewhat abnormal position of the English reformers. Viewed from a Scottish standpoint, it may be charged with want of boldness and decision. In another point of view it may be questioned how far it was expedient to identify themselves with the churches of Scotland and Geneva so closely as to borrow from them even their nomenclature. In Scotland, the very name of "bishop" had become odious from the fraudulent and unscrupulous measures employed to introduce the order. In England, on the other hand, it had been from the beginning associated with reformation, and sanctified by martyrdom. The levelling process suggested by Cartwright and his brethren was fitted to startle by its novelty and offend by its ultraism. Perhaps the

apostle's simpler division of church-officers into "the bishops and the deacons," making the one stand for the ministerial, and the other to embrace the administrative duties, spiritual and temporal, with something like Knox's superintendents, who might occupy a higher office, though not a separate order from that of their brother bishops in council, might have better suited the latitude of England, and might not have led, as it did in after times, to such a violent reaction. With regard to liturgies, vestments, crossings, and the like, had the compulsory enactments of the state been withdrawn, there is reason to believe that the church, left to the guidance of her own councils, and of common sense, might have worked herself free from all idolatrous usages. So completely, however, had Roman Catholicism succeeded in enlisting the fine arts into her service, and embalming her deadliest errors in the master-pieces of statuary, painting, music, and architecture, that it was hard to dissociate the festering mass from its graceful and imposing appendages. The common people could never believe that they were not identical. Everything ornamental about religion was "a relic of popery," a symbol of the apocalyptic "lady clothed in scarlet." They made no distinction between the ruddy hue of health and the scarlatina of disease. After all, "the simplicity that is in Christ" is like the simplicity of nature; and the church service might surely have retained all that is naturally beautiful, while discarding the meretricious

trumpetry of superstition, in which there is no real beauty, natural or spiritual. There is nothing, perhaps, in the mere outward ceremonial of our puritan and presbyterian forefathers less worthy of sympathy, or more difficult of defence, than the bareness and scrupulosity that would have banished all that is tasteful and pleasing in the works from the worship of the great Creator.

But, without indulging in such reflections, it may prove more interesting to the general reader to know something more of the men who were most eminent at this period among the presbyterial brotherhood. Let us first, then, introduce the famous Miles Coverdale, usually called Father Coverdale, bishop of Exeter under the reign of Edward VI., the coadjutor of Tyndale in the translation of the scriptures, and afterwards, with the aid of other reformers, the translator of the Geneva Bible. On the accession of Mary, he narrowly escaped suffering the doom that overtook his brother bishops. On returning from exile his bishopric was reserved for him ; but though repeatedly urged to accept of it, yet, on account of the popish habits and ceremonies, " he modestly refused." At the consecration of Archbishop Parker he assisted in a plain black gown. Having received a small benefice, he was followed by multitudes ; but giving offence by his non-conformity, he was obliged to relinquish his flock, and the good old man used to tell his friends that he durst not inform them when or where he would preach,

through fear of offending his superiors. This venerable man lived to an advanced age, and died four years before the conference of the brethren at Wandsworth—the last of the primitive bishops who founded the church of England, and who, judging from his example, had they been spared, would doubtless, like him, have joined the ranks of presbytery and nonconformity.

That pale-visaged man with the slouched hat (the first whose portrait was so taken), with a mild gentle aspect, is John Fox, the martyrologist. His own life would furnish materials for a romance, equal in interest to any he has recorded. A fellow of Oxford College, he converted the arbour in which his companions played by day into a night-study, where he mastered the whole literature of the fathers, Greek and Latin, and the history of the church from its origin to his own times, thus laying up the materials of his celebrated work, "The Acts and Monuments of the Church." Following him to London, we see the poor student reduced to abject poverty, with his young wife, and seated on a bench at St Paul's, with pallid cheeks and sunken eyes; when a gentleman, whose name he never learned, slipped into his hand "a sum of untold money," and he is advanced to be tutor to the Duke of Norfolk's children. But the dark cloud of persecution obscures the sky; he is watched by Bishop Gardiner, and flees in haste to the coast; he steps on board a vessel an hour before the bishop's

pursuivant arrives, and is driven back again by a storm an hour after that officer had departed, otherwise, in all probability, the "Acts and Monuments" would never have seen the light. These he lived, however, to publish in 1563, after eleven years spent in completing them, in a huge folio volume in black-letter type, and with those formidable woodcuts, which, once seen in early life, leave an impression never to be wiped out, and its faithful bloody stories, which have done more to seal the doom of popery in Britain than volumes of controversial divinity. His name does not appear among those who subscribed the discipline of Wandsworth, for he was a cautious man, and averse to extremes; but his principles and practice were, beyond all question, those of the non-conformists.

Thomas Cartwright was unquestionably the leading and most learned man among the party we refer to. Born in 1535, and educated at St John's College, Cambridge, where he obtained his degree of bachelor of divinity, he took an early share in the efforts made for the reformation of the church. In 1570 he was chosen Lady Margaret's professor of divinity, a charge in which he gained many laurels. Eloquent as a speaker, and popular to such a degree that when he preached the sexton was obliged to remove the windows to accommodate his numerous hearers, he was animated beyond the rest of his brethren by the genuine spirit and boldness of a reformer. Such was

his distinguished reputation as a scholar and theologian, that his counsel was frequently sought by foreign divines in the weightiest matters. The University of St Andrews, by the advice of Andrew Melville, offered him, together with his friend, Walter Travers, professorships of divinity; and he was urgently solicited to write a refutation of the Rhemish translation of the New Testament, a work in which he made much progress, till Archbishop Whitgift, to his dishonour, forbade him to proceed. But his varied qualifications could not atone for his nonconformity. He was regarded as the standard-bearer of the party, and was summoned on more occasions than one before the Star Chamber and High Commission. On the last occasion, in 1590, he was thrown into prison, and no less than *thirty-one* articles were exhibited against him. Among other points, he was severely cross-questioned as to the discipline subscribed by the brethren, their number, their places of meeting, and the nature of their business; on all which points he gave them little information. In vain did King James intercede with Elizabeth in behalf of a man so learned and so useful; he was detained a prisoner several years. Like all who have taken a prominent part in withstanding the corruptions of a dominant party in the church, his name has been the butt of all sorts of abuse from those who were interested in supporting them. But seldom have such misrepresentations been wider of the truth. His temper appears to have been

meek, placable, and even yielding. He submitted to the harsh restrictions imposed upon him without a murmur; contented himself with preaching quietly in his hospital at Warwick; and at length even Whitgift was overcome by the mildness of his old antagonist, and exerted himself to procure his freedom. It may tend in some measure to reconcile the conflicting statements about Cartwright, when we say that, like many other excellent men, his real good nature and softness of heart seem to have occasionally forsaken him, and given place to an asperity which surprised his friends as soon as he assumed the controversial pen. He is said to have been the first to introduce the practice of extempore prayer before sermon. It deserves also to be noticed, that, in December 1573, when obliged to flee from the kingdom to escape the fangs of the High Commission, he was unexpectedly invited, together with Mr Snape, to assist the ministers of Jersey and Guernsey in framing the requisite discipline for their churches—these being the only parts within the British dominions where the hands of that court could not reach him. He continued there for some time, particularly at Castle-Cornet in Guernsey, in the exercise of his ministry, and was instrumental in setting up the simple discipline which prevailed there for some time, and relics of which are still extant. He died December 27, 1603, having preached the preceding Lord's-day. After spending two hours in prayer, he signified to his wife, on rising

from his knees, that he had found unutterable joy and comfort, and that " God had given him a glimpse of heaven ;" and in a few hours he departed in peace.

Walter Travers, B.D., of Cambridge University, was, next to Cartwright, the most zealous advocate of the presbyterian discipline. At an early period, unwilling to take orders in the English church, and submit to conformity, he travelled to the continent, and was ordained to the ministry by the presbytery of Antwerp. Returning home, he was invited to the lectureship of the Temple, the duties of which he discharged much to the satisfaction of that society ; but latterly he came into collision with Mr Richard Hooker, author of the " Ecclesiastical Polity," who was chosen as master. No two pictures can be more dissimilar than those which Fuller draws so graphically of the Lecturer and the Master of the Temple, and his testimony to Travers speaks as highly for the candour of the writer as it does for the character of the nonconformist, whom, churchman as he was, he seems to have so greatly admired. " Mr Hooker's voice was low, stature little, gesture none at all, standing stone-still in the pulpit, as if the posture of his body were the emblem of his mind, immovable in his opinions ; where his eye was left fixed at the beginning, it was found fixed at the end of his sermon. His style was long and pithy, driving on a whole flock of several clauses before he came to the close of a sentence. Mr Travers' utterance was

graceful, gesture plausible, matter profitable, method plain, and his style carried in it *indolem pietatis*, 'a genius of grace,' flowing from his sanctified heart. Some say that the congregation in the Temple ebbed in the forenoon, and flowed in the afternoon." On one of these afternoons, as Travers was entering the pulpit, and the crowd of benchers, with Sir Edward Coke among the rest, were preparing to take notes of the discourse, "a sorry fellow," as Fuller calls him, served him with a letter from Whitgift prohibiting him to preach any more. With his usual mild submission to authority, Travers signified the nature of the order to the congregation, and requested them quietly to retire to their chambers. "The judicious Hooker" has been blamed for this summary mode of replying to the arguments of his opponent; but Travers never lost his respect for him, and on one occasion, hearing him unworthily aspersed, he replied, "In truth, I take Mr Hooker to be a holy man." On being silenced at the Temple, the archbishop of Dublin, who knew his worth at Cambridge, invited him to the provostship of Trinity College in that city, where he was much beloved and respected. In Walter Travers we see a beautiful combination of the scholar, the gentleman, and the christian. He died, at an advanced age, about 1624, firm in his principles and independent in spirit to the last; for in his old age, when Archbishop Usher, out of regard to him as his tutor, offered him a sum of

money, he thankfully declined the gift. He left his library and plate to Sion College, London. "Perchance," as good Fuller says of him, "the reader will be angry with me for saying this much; and I am almost angry with myself for saying no more of so worthy a divine."*

Justice is not done to these reformers within the church if they are looked upon as merely contending for a form of church government. The main object and the moving spring of their contendings was pure love to the gospel of Christ and sincere longing for the salvation of immortal souls. If they looked around them, they beheld the benefices possessed by dignitaries, pluralists, and non-residents, who lived on the fat of the land, and fleeced the flock while "the hungry sheep looked up, and were not fed;" if they looked into the churches, they found a non-preaching clergy, ill-paid, and too often loose-living, mumbling out the service, with the aid of clerks that could not read, to a people who could not spell nor write their own names; while the solemnity might be interrupted by a troop of morrice-dancers and lords of misrule, indulging in their frolics without, and varying them by an occasional skip in the chancel, "playing unseemly parts, wanton gestures, or ribald talk."† In short, if they surveyed the

* Fuller's Church History, vol. iii. book ix. ; Brooks' Puritans, vol. ii. p. 314.

† Bishop Grindal's Injunctions, 1570 ; Biog. Brit. Sup.

parishes of England, they appeared, from the total absence of discipline, like an unwatched and unweeded garden, bereft alike of the advantages of christian doctrine and the products of christian virtue. And it was because they felt persuaded that the presbyterial order not only was a scriptural institution, but that it held out the only promise of a free gospel, a working clergy, and an intelligent, moral, and religious people, that they were so zealous for its substitution. There could not be a more grievous mistake than to conceive that these men were taking up their heads with surplices and tippets, nor a grosser calumny than to represent them as identifying their government with the gospel.* They would as soon have confounded the leaden pipes with the living water that flowed through them. They were, in fact, the only living evangelists of their time. They may not have cared much for the externals of divine service; they may have been unpardonably severe against sports and pastimes; but they were men of God, men

* By carefully hiding the facts above stated, by painting them as a set of factious and fanatical zealots, who aimed only at setting up their idolised "Genevan discipline" against the established order, Dr Heylin, in his "History of the Presbyterians," has contrived to expose them to odium and contempt. Even when obliged to quote their language, he attempts to show that they held presbyterial government to be the very substance of the gospel. Whereas, what they really meant to state was, that it was regard to the very substance of the gospel that induced them to plead so much for their discipline. (Heylin's "Hist. of the Presbyterians," ch. vii. p. 276.) Seldom has history been so miserably distorted by prejudice as in this unhappy work.

of prayer, men of unfeigned piety and charity; much of their time at their clerical meetings was devoted to prayer, fasting, and humiliation; while in their own parishes they were equally distinguished by their faithful preaching and their assiduous almsgiving.

We select one example—not on account of its singularity, but as a fair specimen of the nonconformists of this period—that of Bernard Gilpin. His life reads like a romance. Born of an ancient and honourable family, the bold youth, on leaving his native Westmoreland for Oxford in the latter days of King Henry, is a devoted papist, and being one of their best scholars, is put forward by his companions to hold a disputation with Bishop Hooper and Peter Martyr. The ingenuous youth is staggered, but not convinced, and must go to Louvain to study the points of controversy in the light of scripture and the fathers. At last he is brought to the full knowledge of the truth, just in time to encounter the flames which were kindled in Smithfield. His mind seems to have been deeply impressed with the responsibilities of the pastoral office, and as nothing grieved him so much as to see the prevailing vice and ignorance of the people, he begins to inveigh against the mischiefs of pluralities and non-residence among the clergy. In vain did Tonstal, bishop of London, and his mother's uncle, tempt him with preferments. "None of our modern rooks could endeavour with greater industry to obtain a

benefice," says Bishop Carleton," "than this man to avoid one;" nothing could tear him from his flock. At length old Tonstal gives place to "bloody Bonner," and we see the devoted pastor on his way to London, carrying with him a long shirt which he had prepared for wearing at the stake. His horse falls by the way, his leg is broken, and before the limb can be healed, Queen Mary dies, and he escapes martyrdom. He is appointed to the rectorship of Houghton-le-Spring, where he appears to have been as much bent on feeding the bodies of his parishioners as on the cure of their souls. He has three tables constantly spread at the rectory, one for the gentry, another for the farmers, and another for the labourers. In the midst of these labours in the south, his heart is touched by reflecting on the deplorable condition of his countrymen in the north; and leaving an assistant behind him, he betakes himself every year to the most neglected parishes in Northumberland, Westmoreland, Cumberland, and Yorkshire. But it is chiefly in Redesdale and Tynedale, the most barbarous districts, that we find him engaged in his daring peregrinations, wandering among marauders in the hills, stripping himself of his coat to clothe the starving beggar; and preaching alike in barns to the people and before the bishop of Durham and his clergy with equal boldness and freedom. A strict nonconformist, he was "against separation" from the church; and he closed his life after having richly earned the conjunct titles of

“The Northern Apostle” and “The Friend of the Poor.” In connection with this excellent character, we feel unwilling to pass another nonconformist, John Ball, the author of a “Treatise of Faith,” a scholar and divine, who lived contented, charitable, and facetious,* on an income of twenty pounds, and teaching a school all the week to eke out his scanty means, and yet leaving, as even Wood confesses, “the character of a learned, pious, and eminently useful man,” and deserving, as Baxter says, “as high honour as the best bishop in England.”

This portion of our annals may be closed by adverting to the subsequent fortunes of presbytery during the reign of James I. On the accession of that monarch to the English throne, great hopes were entertained by the presbyterians from one who, from his antecedents, might have been expected to show them favour, or at least grant them some relief. Petitions poured in upon the Scottish monarch from all directions. One of these, called “the millenary petition,” being signed by a thousand clergy, was moderate in its demands. Others aimed at a more thorough reform. But a change had come over the mind, or at least the policy, of James since he had interceded for the noncon-

* His humour was of a very quiet character. “If the bishop silence me,” he said, “I shall take off my hat and thank him. If we are banished abroad, you shall preach, and I shall teach a school. You will find it more difficult to teach men than boys.” To a passionate man, he said, “You ride an unruly horse, and you need a strong bit and bridle. The affections are bad guides, though good followers.”

formists with Elizabeth, and since he pronounced such a high-flown eulogy on the Scottish church, contemptuously styling the English service no better than "an ill-said mass." He was now busily engaged in those manœuvres by which he succeeded in imposing a species of prelacy upon Scotland, and was not likely to favour the presbyterians, from whom his measures at home had met so much unceremonious resistance. But, unlike Elizabeth, who ruled by the strong arm of law, it was the pride of James to manage by state policy. In January 1603, he summoned a conference at Hampton Court between some of the bishops and clergy on the one side, and four of the nonconforming ministers on the other, viz. Dr Rainolds, Dr Sparke, Mr Knewstubs, and Mr Chaderton. In point of learning, indeed, four more fitting representatives could hardly be selected; but, in a matter affecting the whole nation, they were deficient in the firmness, the impulse, and the commanding eloquence which the circumstances demanded. Dr Rainolds was unquestionably the most learned man of his age, so deeply read that he was called "a living library." On the field of written controversy he had vanquished the popish champion, Bellarmine; and for his skill in Hebrew and Greek, he was chosen one of the translators of our authorised version of the Bible. But he was moderate in his views of church government, though opposed to the divine right of episcopacy. Dr Sparke had likewise dis-

tinguished himself on the field of controversy, and was at this time opposed to subscription, though he afterwards conformed. Mr Knewstubs and Mr Chaderton were distinguished nonconformists, the latter being also one of the translators of our present Bible. But it soon appeared that these reverend and learned divines had been invited to the conference for any other purpose than to discuss the points in dispute. They were hardly allowed to finish a sentence without being interrupted by the taunts of the bishops ; while the royal pedant, who presided on this occasion, undertook to answer them in his own style. Dr Rainolds having spoken of "the bishop and his presbytery" deciding certain points, his majesty was "somewhat stirred," thinking that they aimed at a Scottish presbytery, "which," said he, "as well agreeth with a monarchy as God and the devil. Then Jack and Tom and Will and Dick shall meet, and at their pleasure censure me and my council. Then Will shall stand up and say, It must be thus ; then Dick shall reply and say, Nay, marry, but we will have it thus. And therefore here I must once reiterate my former speech, *Le roy s'avisera*. Stay, I pray for seven years before you demand that of me ; and if then you find me pursy and fat, and my windpipes stuffed, I will perhaps hearken to you ; for, let that government be once up, I am sure I shall be kept in breath ; then shall we all of us have work enough. But, Dr Rainolds, till you find that I grow lazy, let that alone." He then said he

would tell "them a tale" which referred to the way in which he and his mother had been used by John Knox and the presbyterians of Scotland; on finishing which, he added, rising from his chair, "If this be all they have to say, I shall make them conform themselves, or I will *harry* them out of the land, or else do worse." The levity, bombast, and scurrility with which the Scottish Solomon treated the whole matter could only be equalled by the flattery and servility which he received from the English prelates. "The archbishop of Canterbury said that undoubtedly his majesty spoke by the special assistance of God's Spirit." The bishop of London, "upon his knee, protested that his heart melted within him with joy, and made haste to acknowledge to Almighty God the singular mercy we have received at his hands in giving us such a king, as, since Christ's time, the like, he thought, had not been. Whereunto the lords, with one voice, did yield a very affectionate acclamation!"*

With councillors so compliant, James saw his way open, not only to "harry out" the English nonconformists, but to carry into effect his favourite project for prelatising Scotland. Unhappily, while the spirit of nonconformity remained unsubdued, the pretensions of the hierarchy rose in intensity. Hitherto episcopacy

* The Sum and Substance of the Conference at Hampton Court. By William Barlow, D.D., and Dean of Chester. London, 1604; pp-83, 93.

was regarded in the light of a *human* institution, suggested by the growing exigencies of the church during the third century; and by universal consent of the English and all the reformed churches, the bishop was held as superior to the presbyter only in point of ecclesiastical order. Now, however, the popish theory of the *divine right* of prelacy, first broached in the church of England by Bancroft, one of the shallowest, and carried out by Laud, "one of the most hot-headed and hard-hearted of English prelates,"* began to prevail among the higher clergy, and led to a series of measures which issued in the troubles and calamities of a civil war.

NOTE TO CHAPTER IV.

Travers' "Ecclesiastical Discipline," and "The Order of Wandsworth."

The history of the former rare work shows both the care to conceal and the zeal to suppress its publication. The English translation bears to have been printed at Geneva, and is entitled "A Full and Plaine Declaration of Ecclesiastical Discipline out of the Word of God, and of the declining of the Church of England from the same. At Geneva, MDLXXX." The dedication was written by Thomas Cartwright. In the copy of the edition now before me, it is stated, in the handwriting of the late Principal Cunningham, D.D., of Edinburgh, that "a copy of this book was priced in a London catalogue at £2, 8s." It seems to have been

* Lord Macaulay.

thrice published, and thrice seized and destroyed. When published at Cambridge, "orders were sent to seize on the whole impression, or the greater part of it" (Brooks' Puritans).

The Order of Wandsworth.

The publication of the work in 1644, at the time of the Long Parliament, is entitled, "A Directory of Government contended for, and as far as the time would suffer, practised by the first Non-conformists in the days of Queen Elizabeth; found in the study of that accomplished divine, Thomas Cartwright, and reserved to be published in such a time as this, 1644." Brooks has fallen into an error by confounding this work with that of Travers. He says, "Mr Travers had a principal hand in writing and publishing the celebrated work, entitled '*De Disciplina Ecclesiastica ex Dei verbo descripta*,' commonly called 'The Book of Discipline.' It was designed as a platform of Church discipline, and subscribed by Mr Travers and many of his learned brethren" (Neal's Puritans, vol. i. p. 423.) He adds, "It may be proper here to observe that, in the year 1644, when the Book of Common Prayer was abolished by order of the Parliament, the Book of Discipline was republished; it was printed under this title, 'A Directory of Government, &c.'" But the "Directory of Government" published in 1644 is quite another work from that of Travers, in which the author speaks in his own person. The "Directory" found in Cartwright's study is unquestionably the "Order of Wandsworth" subscribed by the ministers "in the days of Queen Elizabeth."



CHAPTER V.

ENGLISH PRESBYTERY IN THE ASCENDANT.

A.D. 1625-1643.

**“ Let them exalt him in the congregation of the people, and praise him
in the assembly of the elders.”**

Psalm cvii. 32.

CHAPTER V.

A.D. 1625-1643.

*English Presbytery in the Ascendant—The Westminster Divines—
Characters and Incidents of the Westminster Assembly.*

THOSE who have carefully studied the map of English history in its religious aspects, must have observed two currents running through the whole in opposite directions. The one is that of absolutism, in the form of a dominant hierarchy, more or less upheld by the civil arm. The other is that of conscience, alternately sinking beneath or soaring above the force of its antagonist, but resting throughout on the authority of scripture. These conflicting principles are seen to be mutually aggressive—absolutism aiming at putting down the convictions of conscience, while conscience, not content with enjoying its own rights, feels constrained to advocate the general cause of freedom in the interests of true religion. In justice to English presbytery, it must be owned that it would never have entered on the stormy sea of revolution had it not been compelled, and that if involved in political strife, it has been swept away with the rising tide, by a course of the most arbitrary and unconstitutional pro-

ceedings. Charles I., from the moment that he placed himself at the disposal of Archbishop Laud in the church and of Earl Strafford in the state, inaugurated the fatal career which brought him and his two advisers to the block. As we have only now to do with the fortunes of English presbytery, we may observe that Laud, previous to his insane attempt to impose upon Scotland a service-book of his own composition, much more mediæval and popish than the English Book of Common Prayer, had commenced a series of cruel prosecutions against the English nonconformists. The following specimen may suffice. Dr Alexander Leighton, a Scotsman by birth, an eminent divine and physician, and father of the amiable Archbishop Leighton, published, about 1628, a book entitled "Zion's Plea against the Prelacy." The book would hardly be read in our day, but it contained some sharp reflections on the prelates of the time. The author was seized in London, and cast into a loathsome cell in Newgate, where he contracted a painful disorder. While in this deplorable state he was dragged before the Star Chamber in 1630, where, at the instigation of Laud, the following sentence was passed upon him—to have his ears cut off, to have his nose slit, to be branded in the face, to stand in the pillory, to be whipped at the post, to pay £10,000, and to suffer perpetual imprisonment! On hearing this extraordinary sentence pronounced, the pinched features of the archbishop relaxed into a smile of satisfaction,

and taking off his hat and holding up his hands, he "gave thanks to God who had given him the victory over his enemies."* To the astonishment even of the members of the court, who thought the punishment was merely intended to strike terror, it was literally carried into execution and that with the utmost severity. The prisoner had the first part of the sentence inflicted at Westminster, by having one ear cut off, one nostril slip up, being branded on one cheek with the letters S. S. (*i.e.*, sower of sedition), put in the pillory, and kept there for two hours in frost and snow, then tied to a post and whipped with a triple cord till the flesh came off. Seven days after this barbarous process, while his wounds were yet fresh, he was taken to the pillory at Cheapside, where the remainder of the punishment was executed in the same manner. Ten years afterwards the unhappy man was found by the Long Parliament in prison, blind, deaf, and unable to crawl; and the clerk, on reading the record of his sufferings, in the petition which he sent to the house for redress, was frequently interrupted by the sobs and groans which the recital drew from the members.†

Meanwhile events were hastening to a crisis. Twelve years had elapsed, during which England had been governed without a parliament, and for twenty-

* Rushworth's Collect., vol. ii. p. 56, 57; Laud's Diary, in which he took memoranda of the proceedings; Prynne's Breviate of Laud, p. 16.

† Rushworth, vol. v. p. 20.

eight years the church of Scotland was governed without a General Assembly. At length, roused by a general sense of the public danger, the Scots, in 1637, renewed their National Covenant, with special clauses abjuring prelacy and episcopal innovations. They succeeded in obtaining an assembly at Glasgow in 1638, at which, in the face of a royal proclamation for their dissolution, and encouraged by the flower of the Scottish nobility, they proceeded to depose the bishops introduced by James, and at once voted to restore the presbyterian government, which it had cost twenty-eight years to pull down. Then followed, in 1641, the dreadful massacre of the Irish protestants, which threw such a dark cloud over the prospects of Charles—the convocation of the Long Parliament—the indictment and execution of Laud and Strafford for treason—and that long civil war between king and parliament.

Amidst those civil convulsions met the Westminster Assembly of Divines. In 1642, the stately fabric of English prelacy had been levelled to the ground, and the question was, what should be substituted in its room? On the 12th of June 1643 there was passed “An ordinance of the lords and commons in parliament, for the calling of an assembly of learned and godly divines and others, to be consulted with by the parliament for the settling of the government and liturgy of the church of England, and for the vindicating and clearing of the doctrine of the said church from false

aspersions and interpretations." The list of persons named amounted to 151, including 10 lords and 20 commoners, as assessors, and 121 divines. The assembly thus convened was plainly abnormal, and it could only be justified by the extraordinary circumstances of the country. Strictly speaking, it ought to have been summoned by royal proclamation; but the king was now in the field, with his council, in opposition to the parliament. It ought to have been a general convocation of the bishops and clergy; but prelacy had already been condemned by parliament, and the great body of the clergy may be said to have been yet on their trial. Besides, it was doubtful if such an order of parliament would have been obeyed by the prelatical portion of the clergy, who uniformly ranged themselves under the royal banner. A selection therefore was necessary. Four bishops were named, while several of the divines were known to be favourable to a modified episcopacy, others to presbytery or independency. Commissioners were invited from Scotland and Ireland. To the members themselves no reasonable objection could be taken. Except the Scots commissioners, who had no vote in the assembly, they were, without exception, in episcopal orders, educated in the universities, and mostly graduates.* One thing, too, is certain, they were almost all of them conformists, having yielded practical compliance to the bishops and the laws, though

* Neal's Puritans, iii. 55.

they may have longed to see the mischiefs of both removed.*

Nothing could exceed the transport of delight diffused throughout Scotland when it was understood that the English parliament had called such an assembly, and that not only had the church been requested to share in its deliberations, but that the English divines had invited the whole nation to join with England in a league for the protection of their mutual liberties. The Scots had been threatened with a military invasion, or what was called "the bishops' war," and the fearful Irish rebellion had alarmed them for the safety of the protestant religion; but it was no selfish regard to their own interests that led them to hail the proposal. For many years the church of England, as she grew in prelatie pretensions, had declined in catholicity. Shaking off her intercourse with Scotland and the continental churches, she had locked herself up in a state-imposed uniformity and aristocratic exclusiveness. But this unexpected proposal revived old associations, and the Scottish church longed to clasp the hand of her sister church of England once more in mutual fellowship. The General Assembly sent up the most cordial congratulations, and appointed as their commissioners to the assembly at Westminster, Messrs Alexander Henderson, Samuel Rutherford, Robert Baillie, and George Gillespie; with the Earl of Cassilis, Lord Maitland, and Sir

* Life of Baxter, i. p. 49.

Archibald Johnstone, as lay assessors. The English commissioners, represented by Vane and Nye, who were of the independent party in parliament, would have preferred a civil league, while the Scotch were earnest for a religious covenant. But matters were pressing, and a compromise was agreed upon by Henderson proposing that it should be called "A solemn league and covenant." This memorable document proposed three grand objects—"To endeavour the extirpation of popery, prelacy, superstition, heresy, and profaneness; to endeavour the preservation of the reformed religion in Scotland, and the reformation of religion in the kingdoms of England and Ireland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, according to the word of God and the example of the best reformed church; and to endeavour to bring the churches of God in the three kingdoms to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion, confession of faith, form of church government, directory for worship and catechising; that we and our posterity after us, may, as brethren, live in faith and love, and the Lord may delight to dwell in the midst of us."* Some, though averse to the "English diocesan frame," stumbled at the extirpation of *prelacy*, being still unwilling to condemn the primitive episcopacy, if modified by some admixture of presbyterial rule. To meet this difficulty a parenthesis was introduced, describing the exact nature of the prelacy that was intended,

* See note to this chapter on the Solemn League and Covenant.

namely, the various offices depending in the English hierarchy.* In this form, after all due solemnities, and with their right hands lifted up to heaven, was the solemn league and covenant sworn by the English parliament and by the assembly of divines, in St Margaret's Church, September 25, 1643. A new complexion was thus given to the deliberations of the assembly, which, instead of occupying itself, as was first intended, with the thirty-nine articles and the revisal of the liturgy, now began to carry out the purposes of the solemn league by promoting a general uniformity in religion in the three kingdoms.

The Westminster Assembly did not aim at the character of an œcumenical or general council of ancient times, nor did it assume the form or functions of a synod or general assembly of the church. It was simply a "council of advice" to the English parliament at a special crisis, and when the affairs of the nation were inseparably bound up with religious questions. An episcopal convocation, even though the monarch would have consented to call it, was, in the circumstances, out of the question. That which now sat under the interlacing arches of Henry VII.'s Chapel was not constituted perhaps in all respects as might have been desired. More particularly, it was in one sense too much the creature of the Long

* Sylvester's Reliquiæ; Baxter's Life, i. p. 48. "Looking at the ecclesiastical opinions of Vane and Nye, we cannot defend their conduct on this occasion against the charge of inconsistency."—*Stoughton's Eccl. Hist.—Church of the Civil Wars*, p. 291.

Parliament, who convoked the meeting, selected the members of assembly, nominated its president, prescribed its bye-laws, and kept a firm hold and a vigilant eye on all their proceedings. Still, with all these drawbacks, it must be conceded that parliament could hardly have made a selection of more pious, learned, and conscientious men; that in all their consultations and decisions they manifested a becoming independence of spirit; and that they gave their honest advice to those who had asked for it, without either shaping it to the times or truckling to the civil rulers as their superiors. But instead of pronouncing a general verdict on the assembly—as to which party spirit may be as much divided in our own day as in the days of the Commonwealth—we may better serve the interests of truth, and furnish materials for a fair judgment, by giving a sketch of the leading characters and incidents of the Westminster Assembly.

The Westminster Assembly commenced its sittings July 1, 1643. The meeting was held at first in Henry VII's chapel, where the convocation used to meet; but on the approach of winter they removed to the Jerusalem chamber. "The members came to the assembly," says Neal, "not in their canonicals, but in black coats and bands, in imitation of the foreign protestants." The spectacle of such an assembly of grave-looking divines thus arrayed, with the peaked beards and mustaches then

worn, and the broad double ruff in the Elizabethan style round the neck, must have been singularly imposing.* Still more interesting is the sight when we reflect on the momentous crisis and the results of the meeting. The Diet of Augsburg in 1530, when the protestant confession was first unfurled, the Synod of Dort in 1618, when Arminianism was condemned, and the Westminster Assembly of 1643, form landmarks in the history of protestantism. Each of these convocations met in troublous times, and has stamped its image more or less forcibly on succeeding ages. Each aimed at settling, if possible, the controversies of the day—quieting the commotions of society, and furnishing a basis of co-operation against the common enemy, and of such a union among the friends of truth as might refute the calumny that protestantism was another name for heresy and contention.

The vergers of Westminster Abbey, as they conduct their groups of visitors to the tombs of the ancient monarchs of England, take care to point out the chapel of Henry VII. ; but in their drawling descriptions, no mention is made of the Westminster Assembly that met within these dingy walls in 1643. To any inquiry in regard to such an Assembly, the reply will be the stolid look of ignorance ; and yet, in comparison with them, how little have these great ones of the earth whose bones repose here done

* Some idea of the scene may be formed from the picture of the French synod prefixed to Quick's "Synodicon."

to perpetuate their memory—how little have they left to benefit posterity, or add to the world's stock of ideas !

“The knights are dust,
And their good swords are rust;
Their souls are with the saints we trust.”

It was otherwise with the assembly whose history we are now to trace. They live in their writings ; they speak through their monuments ; their influence is felt down to the present day, and over the whole world ; and the standards which they compiled in this ancient abbey mould the creed of whole churches wherever the English language is spoken.

And, first, our attention is naturally directed to the prolocutor, Dr William Twisse. We see before us a venerable man, verging on seventy years of age, with a long pale countenance, an imposing beard, lofty brow, and meditative eye, the whole contour indicating a life spent in severe and painful study. Such was the rector of Newbury, one of the most learned and laborious divines of his day. Educated at Oxford, where he spent sixteen years in the closest application to study, and acquired an extensive knowledge of logic, philosophy, and divinity,—holy in his converse, quiet and unassuming in his manners, he gained the admiration of all his contemporaries, and friends and foes speak of him with the profoundest respect. Dr Owen, though he wrote against him, never mentions his name without an epithet of admiration—“This veteran leader, so well trained in the scholastic field,

—this great man,—the very learned and illustrious Twisse.”* It is very apparent, however, that, with all his learning, the plodding and subtle controversialist is not the man exactly cut out for the situation in which he has been placed. He has no turn for public speaking, no talent for extemporaneous effusion, no great tact for guiding the deliberations of a mixed assembly. “The man,” says Baillie, “as the world knows, is very learned in the questions he has studied, and very good, beloved by all, and highly esteemed; but *merely bookish*, and not much, as it seems, acquaint with conceived prayer, and among the unfittest of all the company for any action; so after the prayer he sits mute.”† “Good with the trowel,” says Fuller, “but better with the sword, more happy in polemical divinity than edifying doctrine.”‡ During the warm, and occasionally rather stormy debates of the assembly, the good man sits uneasy, obviously longing for his quiet study at Newbury. At length, after about a year’s trial, exhausted and distressed by employment so uncongenial to his habits, he requests permission to retire home. There he meets with trials of another kind. The civil war has commenced; he is driven by the cavaliers from his quiet rectory, and some of the assembly, deputed to visit him, report that he was “very sick, and in great straits.” At last the good old man, heart-broken

* Reid’s *Memoirs of the Westminster Divines*, vol. i. p. 55.

† *Letters*, ii. 198.

‡ Fuller’s *Ch. Hist.*, iii. 467.

with the distractions of the times, welcomes death as an end to all strife, and expires in July 1646, with these last words, "Now at length I shall have leisure to follow my studies to all eternity!"* His remains were followed by the whole Assembly of Divines to what was designed as their final resting-place in Westminster; but even there he was not suffered to rest, his bones having been dug up after the Restoration by the government of Charles II., and cast into a hole in a common churchyard;† an honour which his dust shared with that of several other patriots and holy men, and among the rest with that of "the unconquerable Blake."

Immediately before the chair of the prolocutor are seated his two assessors, Dr Cornelius Burgess, and Mr John White, of Dorchester, both of whom deserve our attention.

Dr Burgess, vicar of Watford, and one of the preachers in St Paul's, London, is a character exactly the reverse of the quiet and scholastic Twisse. "He is a very active and sharp man," says Baillie. Possessed of the spirited and manly character which eminently distinguished our reforming ancestors, he was early engaged in the strife, and suffered considerably from the bishops for his freedom in denouncing the corruptions of the church. Preaching before Archbishop Laud, he condemned him to his face, and

* Middleton's Biog. Evang., vol. iii. p. 164.

† Brooks' Hist. of Puritans, vol. iii. p. 16.

fairly frightened that little tyrant, by protesting that "he would stand to what he had said in that sermon against all opposers, even to the death." We are not surprised to find one of such intrepidity taking an active share in the cause of the parliament, and reaping his full share in the abuse poured by prelati- cal writers on all who did so, in proportion to the zeal they displayed and the influence they possessed. It would be too much to believe Anthony Wood, when he speaks of his heading the London mob who besieged the parliament, roaring out for justice against the bishops, "whenever Burgess did but hold up his finger to his myrmidons;" or of his turning back, and looking on the rabble, saying, "These are my ban-dogs; I can set them on, and I can take them off!" or of his riding at the head of the London militia, with his case of pistols, under the designation of Colonel Burgess, urging them on to plunder and rapine.* These stories are only exaggerated caricatures of the man. But we see what gave them some semblance of probability, in the boldness with which (we shall not say with what degree of propriety) he denounced deans and chapters in several speeches delivered in the House of Commons in the year 1641, and the zeal with which he used his influence in the pulpit as one of the most popular preachers of his day, as well as devoted his substance to the advancement of political and religious liberty. Un-

* Wood's *Athenæ Oxon.*, by Bliss, vol. iii. pp. 682, 683.

daunted and independent, he stood out for some time alone against the subscription of the covenant, though ultimately he yielded to light, and became a zealous presbyterian.* And yet, with all his zeal for liberty, Dr Burgess was no republican. Regardless of consequences, at a time when it was most dangerous to vent his opinions, when the power of Cromwell and the army was at its height, he inveighed with the greatest freedom against the design of executing the King, and drew up a paper, subscribed by fifty-seven presbyterian ministers in London and the vicinity, with his own name at the head of them, condemning and remonstrating against that step, as alike, they said, "inconsistent with the word of God, the principles of the protestant religion, the constitution of the country, the oath of allegiance, and the solemn league and covenant, from all or any of which engagements we know not any power on earth able to absolve us or others." †

The venerable-looking old man, of portly and dignified presence, seated next to Dr Burgess, as his fellow-assessor, is his brother-in-law, Mr John White, of Dorchester, generally known at the time by the honourable title of the *Patriarch of Dorchester*. "A grave man," says Fuller, "but without moroseness,

* Calamy says, he "refused taking the covenant till he was suspended" (Account of Ejected Ministers, ii. 586). This, however, does not agree with Baillie's account: "Only Dr Burgess did doubt for one night" (Let. ii. 98).

† Calamy's Continuation of Account, ii. 736-743.

who would willingly contribute his shot of facetiousness on any just occasion."* The personification of piety, wisdom, and benevolence, an eloquent speaker, a man of hospitals and plans for the relief of pauperism, he had in his own sphere effected such a reform on the morals of the people, and done so much for enriching the industrious and relieving the poor, as well as providing an asylum for the persecuted in New England, that we are not surprised to learn "he had great influence with his party both at home and abroad, who bore him more respect than they did to their diocesan."† Mr White was the great-grandfather of John and Charles Wesley.‡

It would be improper to pass without notice Mr Charles Herle, who succeeded Dr Twisse as prolocutor of the assembly,—“one,” says Fuller, “so much christian, scholar, and gentleman, that he can unite in affection with those who are disjoined in judgment from him,”§—a sentence which, in one stroke, describes the man. He was accounted a moderate presbyterian. He wrote a book against independency, and yet he says in his preface, “The difference between us is not so great; at most it does but ruffle a little the fringe, not any way rend the garment of Christ; it is so far from being fundamental, that it is scarcely a material difference.” The presence of such

* Fuller's Worthies of England, fol. 1662.

† Athenæ, iii. 237.

‡ Kirk's Mother of the Wesleys, 18.

§ Church Hist., iii. 467.

a man in the chair is sufficient to redeem the assembly from the charge of illiberality or vulgar fanaticism.

But who is this person of delicate appearance, "small stature, and child-like look,"* who occupies the place of assessor to Mr Herle in the absence of the Patriarch of Dorchester? That man is one of the greatest ornaments of the Assembly, Mr Herbert Palmer, vicar of Ashwell, and afterwards one of the masters of Queen's College, Cambridge, where he had received his education. He was a gentleman of property; but, early impressed with the preciousness of the Saviour and with love to souls, he devoted himself to the ministry with unwonted ardour and success. With him the work of the ministry was, in the truest sense, *the cure of souls*,—a work in which he was willing literally "to spend and to be spent;" for not only was his fortune expended in works of charity, but his delicate frame was wasted by his abundant labours in preaching; while to the remonstrances of his friends he would reply, "that his strength would spend of itself, though he did nothing, and it could not be better spent than in God's service."† One styles him "a man of uncommon learning, generosity, and politeness."‡ He was an accomplished scholar and orator; yet, in the simplicity of his preaching, he condescended to the meanest capacity. At first he

* Clark's Lives, Reid, ii. 102. † Middleton's Biog. Evan., iii. 192.

‡ Granger's Biog. Hist., ii. 182. He adds that Palmer "spoke the French language with as much facility as his mother tongue." He used to preach to the French congregation at Canterbury (Reid, ii. 102).

had his scruples about presbytery, and particularly the divine right of ruling elders; but at length, satisfied by the arguments adduced, "gracious and learned little Palmer," as Baillie affectionately calls him, became a thorough presbyterian.

On looking around the assembly, we find the greater part of them, as we formerly hinted, more or less presbyterian in their judgment. Among these, however, there were some who distinguished themselves by their superior zeal and ability in the cause of that polity. There, for example, is a knot of divines who joined together in the composition of that famous defence of presbyterial government in reply to Bishop Hall, entitled *Smectymnuus*,—"a startling word," as Calamy styles it, made up of the initial letters of their names, Stephen Marshall, Edmund Calamy, Thomas Young, Matthew Newcomen, and William Spurstow.* This work, which was published in 1641, gave the first serious blow to prelacy. It was composed in a style superior to that of the Puritans in general, and was, by the confession of the learned Bishop Wilkins, "a capital work against episcopacy."†

* Calamy's Account, ii. 471.

† Kippis' Biog. Brit., art. "Calamy, Edmund." Dr Kippis says, "This piece is certainly written with great fierceness of spirit and asperity of language," and quotes in evidence some strong things said against the "practices of the prelates." But Neal, who has given a long account of the work, states that if the rest of the clergy had been of the same spirit and temper with Bishop Hall, the controversy between him and the Smectymnean divines might have been compromised (Hist. of Puritans, vol. ii. ch. viii.)

The first in this group of divines, Mr Stephen Marshall, who was now lecturer at St Margaret's, Westminster, was certainly one of the notabilities, if not the most illustrious character of his day. From the commencement of the civil war down to the restoration, he took the most active share in the political as well as ecclesiastical movements of the times, was ever in the fore-front of the battle, and only laid down his armour with his life. In 1640, we find him, along with Dr Burgess, urging all, by animated speeches on the floor of parliament, as well as by rousing sermons from the pulpit, to take up arms for securing the constitution, and to proceed with all despatch in the work of reforming the church. To powerful popular talents as a speaker—(Baillie calls him "the best of preachers in England")—Marshall added the active business habits which qualified him for taking the lead in these boisterous times. Fuller tells us he was a great favourite in the Assembly,—“their trumpet, by whom they sounded their solemn fasts; in their sickness their confessor; in the assembly their counsellor; in their treaties their chaplain; in their disputations their champion.” We have no reason to suppose that he ever abandoned his principles; but there is ground to suspect that he allowed himself to be carried away by the stream into something like republicanism. We do not find Marshall's name among the ministers who remonstrated against taking away the life of the King.

Without giving credit to a tithe of charges brought against him by his enemies, or even of what Denzil Holles, his presbyterian opponent in politics, has advanced against him,* we fear that he exposed himself to some of them by his keenness as a political partisan. Certain it is, that never did man suffer more in his character from the abettors of tyranny than Stephen Marshall. They reviled him during life; they insulted him on his sick-bed; they dug up his bones after the restoration; and they heaped every sort of abuse upon his memory. One writer calls him the "Geneva bull, a factious and rebellious divine." Another styles him "a notorious independent, and the arch-flamen of the rebellious rout."† The fact is, however, that he never was an independent, but lived and died an avowed presbyterian. And (such is the different light in which some men appear in private and in public life) Richard Baxter, who knew him well, declares that he was a "sober and worthy man," and used to observe, on account of his great moderation, "that if all the bishops had been of the same spirit as Archbishop Usher, the independents like Jeremiah Burroughs, and the presbyterians like Mr Stephen Marshall, the divisions of the church would soon have been healed."‡ The next in the group is Mr Edmund Calamy, of Aldermanbury, London, the grandfather of the still more

* Mem. of Denzil Lord Holles, pp. 88, 107, 123.

† Athenæ, by Bliss, iii. 715.

‡ Brooks' Puritans, iii. 251.

celebrated Edmund Calamy, of London, than whom none was more highly respected as a man, or admired as a preacher. Learned in controversy, he was the first man openly to avow and defend the presbyterian government before a committee of parliament; and though tempted afterwards with a bishopric, he continued staunch to his principles to his dying day.

But it is time to glance at the other presbyterian members of this assembly. Among those most distinguished for their learning it would be unpardonable to pass unnoticed Dr Edward Reynolds, who, Wood tells us, was "the pride and glory of the presbyterian party." And good reason had they to be proud of one who excelled so much as a scholar, orator, and theologian.* King Charles, on his restoration, endeavoured to bring over to prelacy some of the most eminent divines among the dissenters. He failed with them all except Dr Reynolds, who accepted of the bishopric of Norwich. For this conformity he is taunted by those same writers who teem with reproaches against the nonconformity of his more consistent brethren. We certainly shall not vindicate his conduct in this matter; though it is well-known that, even after his elevation to the mitre, he continued, in heart and judgment, a presbyterian. Those who are anxious for an explanation of this anomaly, may find it perhaps in a cause to which we may ascribe the falls and fickleness of greater men

* Middleton's Biog. Evan., iii. 426 ; Granger's Biog. Hist., iii. 240.

than Reynolds, and which is hinted at by Wood when he says—"It was verily thought by his contemporaries that he never would have been given to change, had it not been to please a *covetous and politic consort*, who put him upon those things he did."* Mild and timorous to excess, especially in the presence of great men, he was altogether unfit to contend with them; but one who knew him well has declared that "Bishop Reynolds carried the wounds of the church in his heart and bowels to the grave with him." †

Dr Arrowsmith and Dr Tuckney may be classed together, as alike celebrated for their learning, as having both been appointed to masterships and professorships of divinity in the University of Cambridge, and as having both, it is said, had a principal share in the composition of the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. Dr Arrowsmith is described by Baillie, curiously enough, "as a man with a glass eye, in place of that which was put out by an arrow," and a "learned divine," of which we may judge from his "Tactica Sacra" and "Chain of Principles." The plain but pleasant-looking old man who gazes at us in his portrait with a calm eye and studious brow, surmounted with its modest black cap, is Dr Anthony Tuckney, who is also known to the theological world by his writings. "How often," says one of his

* Athenæ, by Bliss, iii. 1086.

† Calamy's Life of Baxter, i. 174, 176.

grateful students, "have I heard him instigating and inflaming the minds of the youth in their studies, as much by his example as his exhortations! How often seen him relieving the poor with bountiful hand, assigning to them a great part of his income!"*

With these men we might associate, as fellow-masters at Cambridge, Dr Lazarus Seaman, who is described as "a person of most deep, piercing, and eagle-eyed judgment in all points of controversial divinity, in which he had few equals, if any superiors,"—"an invincible disputant," and whom even Anthony Wood is constrained to acknowledge as a learned man; and there is Mr Richard Vines, of whom Fuller says he was "the champion of the party in the assembly, and therefore called their Luther:"† and there is Dr Edmund Staunton, son of Sir Francis Staunton; and Dr Hoyle, professor of divinity in Trinity College, Dublin, the only Irish divine in the assembly,‡ and one who was held in high esteem, a master of the Greek and Latin fathers, and who, Calamy says, "reigned both in the chair and in the pulpit."§ Under the management of these conscientious and talented masters, some of the future ornaments of the English church, such as Tillotson, Stillingfleet, and many others, received their education.

* Prælect Theol. per A. Tuckney, Prof.

† Dyer's Hist. of Cambridge, ii. 106; Fuller's Worthies.

‡ Reid's Hist. of Presb. Church in Ireland, i. 404.

§ Calamy's Continuation, ii. 472.

And then, still looking round on the presbyterians in the assembly, we find a Thomas Gataker, whose writings gave ample attestation to the character he received during life of a perfect *helluo librorum*,—a devourer of books; who showed a learning as multifarious as it was profound, and who could write as learnedly in favour of Lots as on Transubstantiation and the Tetragrammaton. While among those more distinguished for ministerial gifts, “workmen that need not to be ashamed,” we find such names as those of Dr William Gouge of Blackfriars, London, one of the annotators on the Bible, and president of Zion College; and Mr Simeon Ashe, of St Austin’s, “good old Mr Simeon Ashe,” as Calamy describes him, “a Christian of the primitive simplicity, and a nonconformist of the old stamp. He was eminent for a holy life, a cheerful mind, and a fluent elegance in prayer. He had a good estate, and was much inclined to entertainments and liberality. His house was much frequented, and he was universally beloved.”* We think from this description we should know good old Mr Simeon Ashe. We can only mention the names of Oliver Bowles, Thomas Case, Anthony Burgess, Francis Cheynel, Jeremiah Whitaker, Joseph Caryl, Obadiah Sedgwick, and others, whose names are associated with writings that have contributed to form the religious character of our nation.

* Calamy’s Account, ii. 1.

But let us not overlook the other members of the assembly who were opposed to the presbyterians. Of these one party was formed by the Erastians, who dissented from the grand proposition of the assembly,—That the Lord Jesus, as king and head of his church, hath therein appointed a government, in the hand of church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate; and whose leading principle was, that all church government ought to be in the hand of the civil rulers. There were only two Erastian divines in the assembly, namely, Dr Lightfoot and Mr Coleman, who was a learned and pious, but somewhat hot-tempered divine, and whom Baillie describes, perhaps in too strong colours, as “a man reasonably learned, but stupid and inconsiderate, half a pleasant [half a fool], and of small estimation.” But as Coleman died during the very heat of debate on the proposition already mentioned, Lightfoot was left to enter his solitary dissent against it. Insignificant as this party was in point of numbers, it derived importance from the character for learning enjoyed by the persons composing it, and still more so from the powerful support they received from the House of Commons, the most of whom, according to Baillie, were “downright Erastians.” “The pope and the king,” says this lively chronicler, “were never more earnest for the headship of the church than the plurality of this parliament.” The learning of Lightfoot is beyond all question, and he certainly made abundant

use of it in the assembly, and, if we may judge from his own diary of the proceedings, with no small *éclat*. In these disputations he was ably supported by another man of prodigious erudition, the celebrated John Selden, who had a seat in the assembly as one of the lay-assessors deputed by the House of Commons. The grand point maintained by these men was, that the Jewish church and state were all one; that in the Jewish commonwealth there was no church government distinct from the civil government; and that, therefore, there should be no such distinction in christian states. "This man," says Baillie, speaking of Selden, "is the head of the Erastians. His glory is most in the Jewish learning. He avows everywhere that the Jewish state and church were all one, and that so in England it must be; that the parliament is the church."* The presbyterians, on the contrary, maintained that such a distinction did exist under the Old Testament; that the two kinds of government are in their very nature distinct from, and independent of, each other; and that God never did confound them, nor intend that they should ever be confounded together. Without entering into this controversy, which was maintained at great length, and with much learning and ingenuity on both sides, it may be remarked, as in some degree accounting for the line of thought and argument adopted by the three Erastians in this assembly, that all of them

* Letters, ii. 268.

were distinguished by a particular fondness for oriental and rabbinical learning. Coleman was so complete a master of the Hebrew that he was commonly called Rabbi Coleman. And it is well known that the fame of Selden and Lightfoot rests chiefly on the same foundation. Superior as they may have been, it will not be considered a breach of charity to suppose that a consciousness of this tempted them to make a superfluous display of it in the assembly. Certain it is, that though since highly applauded by some, it made but a small impression on the members, who were learned enough to appreciate, but too shrewd to be misled by, the ingenuity of such objections. There is much force in the remark of honest Fuller, when speaking of Selden—"This great scholar, not over-loving of any (and least of these) clergymen, delighted himself in raising of scruples for the vexing of others; and some stick not to say, that those who will not feed on the flesh of God's word cast most bones to others, to break their teeth therewith."* We can hardly admire the vainglorious tone in which he would say to the members, when they cited a text to prove their assertion, "Perhaps in your little pocket-bibles with gilt leaves (which they would pull out and read), the translation may be thus, but the Greek or Hebrew signifies thus and thus."† And we cannot help recalling, in beautiful contrast to this, his own dying declaration, that "out of the numberless

* Fuller's Ch. Hist., iii. 468.

† Brooks' Puritans, iii. 9.

volumes he had read, nothing stuck so close to his heart, or gave him such solid satisfaction, as that single passage in Paul's writings beginning with, 'The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men,' " &c.

But who are these divines who sit apart from all the rest in solemn and anxious consultation, evidently displeased with the whole proceedings of the assembly, and ever and anon disturbing the good harmony that otherwise prevailed? These are the independents. There might be about ten or eleven divines in the assembly who advocated, more or less, the congregational mode of church government; but five of these, more zealous than the rest, formally dissented from the decisions of the assembly, and, afraid that toleration would not be extended to them, appealed to parliament as "the most sacred refuge and asylum for mistaken and misjudged innocence." This appeal was styled, "An Apologetical Narrative to the Parliament," and was signed by Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, Sidrach Simpson, Jeremiah Burroughs, and William Bridge. These were afterwards joined by William Greenhill and William Carter, who with them signed reasons of dissent against the assembly on the conclusion of the "grand debate," as it was called, between the presbyterians and independents, and were hence called "the dissenting brethren." Most of these divines had been compelled, by the persecution of the prelates, to retire to Holland, where

they became acquainted and enamoured with the congregational scheme of government, which had there been set up under the influence of John Robinson, the independent pastor. The most celebrated among them were the two first mentioned, Dr Thomas Goodwin and Mr Philip Nye, whom Wood styles "the atlases and patriarchs of independency." Both of these were eminent for piety and ability. Dr Goodwin, in particular, is well known by his works. He was the favourite minister of Cromwell, through whose influence he was appointed president of Magdalene College in Oxford. Dr Thomas Goodwin (a very different person from John Goodwin, the arminian) was orthodox in doctrine, eloquent in preaching, and exemplary in life. His piety was of the most ardent and enthusiastic cast, tinged, however, with a shade of gloom and austerity, the prevailing vice of the latter days of the Commonwealth.

Mr Philip Nye, of Kimbolton, was in many respects a different character from his friend Goodwin—a keen, sharp-witted man, "of uncommon depth, and seldom if ever outreached." Active from the commencement in urging the covenant and getting up the assembly, in the selection of which he had a principal share, there was none more pertinacious in opposing their progress. He kept them upwards of three weeks debating on one point of the Directory alone, where the communicants were recommended to come up to partake of the supper at a table—insisting on the supe-

rior propriety of having the elements handed to them in their own seats. Though one of the commissioners sent by parliament to solicit the assistance of the Scots, he seems to have taken up a strong prejudice against the government and order of the church of Scotland; and certainly there was no love lost between him and our Scots commissioners. On one occasion, this mutual dislike broke out into a storm, which threatened to disturb the wonted order and tranquillity of the proceedings. Baillie's account of it is amusing:—"Mr Nye was like to spoil all our play, when it came to his turn to oppugn presbytery. When he saw the assembly full of the prime nobles and chief members of both houses, he boldly offered to demonstrate that our way of drawing a whole kingdom under one national assembly was formidable, nay, pernicious, and thrice over pernicious, to civil states and kingdoms." This was too much for the Scottish blood of our commissioners. "We were all highly offended with him," says Baillie. Even the calm, imperturbable Henderson compared this mode of speaking against the government of all the reformed churches to "Lucian and the pagans, who were wont to stir up princes and states against the christian religion." A rupture seemed inevitable. Nye would not retract; the Scots would not sit with Nye, and the independents would not sit without him. "At last," says Baillie, "we were entreated by our friends to shuffle it over the best way might be,

and to go on in our business." Long and tough were the debates in the assembly on the various points of presbyterial order and government. The independents contested manfully, though most annoyingly, every inch of ground. "They truly spake much," says Baillie, "and exceedinglie weel." Doctors, ruling elders, ordination, many congregations under one presbytery; in short, government, worship, and discipline, all were fairly canvassed. Of these debates it is impossible, in the present Annals, to present even an abstract.

In these discussions, none took a busier share than the Scottish commissioners—the last group in the assembly to which we invite attention. Seated on the lowest form, at the right hand of the prolocutor, they may be easily distinguished from the rest of the divines by their careworn countenances, and the intense interest which they manifest in the proceedings of the assembly. To them it was no common cause, for the credit of their own discipline was at stake—the salvation of their beloved church and country is involved. They have come out of a fearful struggle with lordly bishops, popish ceremonies, royal mandates, and battles; they have thrown down the walls of Jericho; but well they know that the liberties of their country still hang trembling in the scale, and that nothing will save them but a successful issue to their present mission. Which of all the members of this assembly wrote home such letters to his

friends as those of Baillie? What breathless anxiety, what anxious prayers, about these poor distressed churches! "Oh, if it please God to perfyte this work, it will be the sweetest and most happy business that ever in this isle was enterprysed! All our companie, thanks to God, feels the fruit of Scotland's prayers!" How cast down at another time about the opposition of the independents—"these, however very good, yet very dangerous and unhappy men, who have been the great and mighty instruments to keep all things here loose both in church and state!" And these still more unhappy Erastian lawyers in the parliament, "who make it their work to spoil our presbytery, not so much upon conscience as upon fears that the presbytery spoil their market, and take up most of the country pleas without law!" How annoyed at the "infamous slowness" of the assembly, considering the formidable growth of hydra-headed sectarianism! "The humour of this people is very various, and inclinable to singularities. No people had so much need of a presbytery!" How much heart, as well as simplicity, in the prayer, that, as an offset to the influence of Cromwell and his army, "it please God to advance our armie, which we expect will *much assist our arguments!*" And yet how hopeful, amidst all their difficulties, that they would "wrestle through, by the help of the prayers of God's people!"*

* Baillie's Letters and Journals, vol. ii. *passim*.

Baillie is always ready to give his meed of commendation to his brethren. "Had not God sent Mr Henderson, Mr Rutherford, and Mr Gillespie among them, I see not that ever they could have agreed to any settled government." As for Henderson, he seems to be at a loss for terms in which to express his admiration—a man, as he said of him after his death, before the General Assembly, who, "having spent his strength, and worn out his days in the service of God and of this church, in his inmost sense he esteemed ought to be accounted by us and posterity the fairest ornament, after John Knox, of incomparable memory, that ever the church of Scotland did enjoy." To the services of Mr Gillespie, who was then in the prime of life, he likewise bears repeated testimony:—"None in all the assembly did reason more pertinently than Mr Gillespie; he is an excellent youth; my heart blesses God in his behalf." It is recorded that on one occasion, when the learned Selden had made a long discourse in favour of Erastianism, and none seemed ready to answer, Gillespie, urged by his brethren, rose, and though blushing with diffidence at the commencement, without any preparation, or even notes to refresh his memory, repeated the substance of Selden's discourse, and refuted it to the admiration of all present. Selden himself is said to have observed at the close, "That young man, by his single speech, has swept away the labours of ten years of my life!"

The assembly having finished its proper business,

may now be viewed as virtually concluded, though the members continued to sit for some time as a committee for examining candidates for ordination, till the dissolution of the Long Parliament, 22d February 1649, when the assembly was finally dissolved, having sat altogether five years, six months, and twenty-two days, in which time they had held one thousand one hundred and sixty-three sessions.

While these deliberations were in progress, the Long Parliament appears to have received their decisions with wonderful unanimity. To the strictly doctrinal articles of the Confession they made no objections ; but they were not so well satisfied with those treating of the power and independence of the church, or with the chapters relating to the civil magistrate and liberty of conscience ; and on the ground of scruples and differences with respect to these, they delayed giving their sanction to the Confession as a whole, till the power was taken out of their hands. The great bugbear was a dread on the part of some, lest, by sanctioning the spiritual independence of the church courts, they might arm the presbyterians with a power superior to the control of the civil government, and thus endanger the liberty of setting up separate churches. This at least was their pretence ; and among other plans to put off the assembly, who earnestly solicited their sanction, they sent back the Confession and Catechisms, with a request that the divines would append authorities from scripture in support of their state-

ments. This task occupied the assembly for many a long day ; and to this we owe the " proofs from scripture," with which these documents are accompanied.

The discussions in the assembly itself appear, on the whole, to have been conducted in a good spirit, and with great unanimity. On doctrinal subjects their harmony seems to have been almost complete. There appear to have been long discussions on the question of election. Neal says, " All the divines were in the anti-arminian scheme, yet some had a greater latitude than others. I find in my MS. the dissent of several members against some expressions relating to reprobation, to the imputation of the active as well as passive obedience of Christ, and to several passages in the chapters of liberty of conscience and church discipline ; but the Confession, as far as it related to articles of faith, passed the assembly and parliament by a very great majority."* They divided themselves into committees, which again allotted the work to sections, each taking a specific topic. The chapter, on being prepared, was then submitted to the assembly, where it was subjected to the most minute examination, sentence by sentence and word by word. The discussions on any disputed point were conducted mostly in the syllogistic form, which admitted of much logical fencing. And yet, after all, the sentiments of the two great parties coincided much more nearly than they have done since that day ; and we are not surprised to

* Neal, iii. 381.

learn that the presbyterians made repeated attempts to effect what was called an "accommodation with their dissenting brethren." These, however, were all defeated by the unhappy disputes which arose on the subject of toleration. Into the merits of this controversy we do not now enter, reserving our remarks till the next chapter.

With regard to the "grand debate," as it was called, between the presbyterians and independents, opinions will, of course, widely differ, according to the sentiments of the two parties, still unhappily existing in the church. By the congregationalists of England it is regarded as a contest involving the whole cause of civil and religious liberty. The five or seven "dissenting brethren" have been represented, in a favourite engraving, hung up in almost every congregational household, in which Philip Nye and his companions stand in the foreground as the champions of liberty, while the presbyterians are seen frowning upon them in sullenness or wrath, like so many inquisitors. The same view is suggested by the historians of the party. "While independent principles," says one of the most candid of these writers, "favoured universal toleration, the presbyterians, by advocating the establishment of classes, synods, and a general assembly, and by calling on the magistrate to enforce the authority of the church, plainly interfered with *the civil rights of the people*. The thoughtful among the independents, therefore, became more and more

averse to the presbyterian scheme ; they saw that it would be fatal to *those very liberties for which the nation had so valiantly contended in the field.*” * One reflection is irresistibly suggested by this assertion, viewed in connection with the sentiment uttered by Philip Nye in the assembly. The Scottish commissioners might be pardoned for feeling aggrieved at that escapade of the independent member. Their countrymen had certainly contended in the field as valiantly as the English for the national liberties. They had fought equally against arbitrary power in the state and prelatial tyranny in the church ; and they had found, in their church, “ drawing a whole kingdom into one national assembly,” their best protection against despotism, and their best security for national liberty. “ Take away the freedom of our assemblies,” said Knox, “ and take away the evangel.” They had contended for its liberty against the arbitrary power of James VI., who held that “ monarchy and presbytery could as easily consist as God and the devil !” And in a short time after this, Cromwell, acting on the principle laid down by Philip Nye, that such assemblies were “ pernicious, thrice over pernicious, to civil states and kingdoms,” forcibly, and at the point of the bayonet, dissolved the General Assembly of the Scottish church. This act of tyranny, as presbyterians would call it,

* Stoughton's Ecol. Hist. of England—Church of the Civil Wars, i. 419.

must, of course, be pronounced quite justifiable, according to Mr Nye, as the civil power must put down as pernicious to the state all such national assemblies, and only tolerate the separate churches of independency.

It would be quite absurd and an outrage on all history to assert that the English presbyterians had wholly escaped from the faults and the fanatical excesses of the times in which they lived. They were men of like passions with ourselves, and, in some instances, they are too chargeable with the sins which beset most men when in power. None will now attempt to vindicate the ungracious violence with which some of them urged the duty of executing vengeance on malignants. Several of them seem to have caught from the spirit of the age an overstrained pietism, which found vent in the most exorbitant length of their devotional exercises. What, for example, would now be thought of a day spent in the assembly, as described by Baillie:—"After Dr Twisse had begun with a brief prayer, Mr Marshall prayed large *two hours* most divinely, confessing the sins of the members of the assembly in a wonderfully pathetic and prudent way. After Dr Arrowsmith preached one hour; then a psalm; thereafter Mr Vines prayed *two hours*, and Mr Palmer preached one hour, and Mr Seaman prayed near *two hours*; then a psalm. After Mr Henderson brought them to a short sweet conference of the heart-confessed and other seen faults to be remedied. Dr Twisse closed with a short prayer and

blessing." Here was a continued service of eight hours in prayer and in preaching, besides other exercises; "and yet," says Baillie, "this day was the *sweetest* that I had seen in England!"* Then, undeniably, the presbyterians partook of the religious austerity of the times. Society indeed assumed, in conversation, dress, and manners, the aspect of a Cistercian convent. Not only were theatres and all places of public amusement closed, but even the fine arts were frowned upon, and open war was proclaimed against all esthetics. All that was beautiful in church music, architecture, or ornament, and in personal elegance and refinement, was rigidly proscribed. Even poetry was at a discount; Milton himself, in his lifetime, in more senses than one, "sung darkling;" and the literary style of the day, unlike either that of the foregoing or the subsequent age, was harsh, stiff, and void of elegance. Even the typography of the period is peculiarly grim and unseemly. Then the sectaries, like children shut up in school for a penance, and interdicted their native sports in the field, enacted the most grotesque pantomimes in the pulpit. "We had a great plenty of religious face-makers," says Dr Eachard, "in the late zealous times."† Addison narrates an anecdote of a youth who was nearly frightened out of his senses on being introduced for examination into the presence of

* Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, ii. 164.

† Granger's *Biog. Hist.*, iv. 225.

Dr Goodwin, the independent master of Oxford, in a dark gallery, when the doctor, "with half-a-dozen nightcaps on his head, and religious horror in his countenance," asked him in a sepulchral voice, "If he was prepared for death?"* To this may be added a peculiar phraseology, and the use of certain cant terms in ordinary intercourse, which, with the short-cropped hair and steeple-hats then worn, furnished abundant materials of pleasantry to the satirists of the succeeding reign.† Such, at least, were the leading features of the metropolis, which set the fashion to the southern part of the kingdom, and among the sectaries of Cromwell's army. These, however, formed but the outer garb, too often assumed to cover hypocrisy and selfish designs. And nothing but deep-rooted prejudice against vital religion would confound such zealots, who threw off the mask at the Restoration, with the good men who proved true to their principles and suffered for their fidelity, and who, in spite of all that may be grating to modern taste in the character of that age, displayed a manliness and depth of feeling in their "pure religion and undefiled before God and the world," resembling the faith that nerved the early martyrs, and emboldened the heralds of the reformation.

* The Spectator, No. 494.

† "Where had they all their gifted phrases,
But from our Calamys and Cases!"

—Butler's *Hudibras*, p. 3.

Among the conflicting parties into which the church is still divided, the Westminster divines have seldom been treated with justice. Clarendon and the prelatical party following in his train have affected to treat them with scorn; our popular histories seldom refer to them at all; in Scotland alone and among presbyterians are their labours duly appreciated. But without drawing invidious comparisons, they will stand a fair comparison with the divines of any church, not excepting those of the church of England. Their talents and acquirements even Milton does not venture to deny. They may have been excelled in point of quaint wisdom by Bishop Hall, or in quainter humour by Thomas Fuller, in eloquence by Jeremy Taylor, in multifarious scholarship by Hammond or Pearson; but in their position and for their work, quaintness, eloquence, and scholarly accomplishments might well be dispensed with. Richard Baxter, who may be taken as a fair judge, says of them, "Being not worthy to be one of them myself, I may the more freely speak that truth which I know, even in the face of malice and envy—that the christian world had never a synod of more excellent divines (taking one thing with another) than this synod and the Synod of Dort." "This is high praise," says a late candid historian, who feels compelled, as a congregationalist, to censure them for their severe Calvinism and intolerance; "but it comes nearer to the truth than the condemnatory verdicts pronounced by some others."*

* Stoughton's *Eccles. Hist. of England—Church of the Civil Wars*, i. 452.

historian Hallam speaks of them as "perhaps equal in learning, good sense, and other merits, to any lower house of convocation that ever made a figure in England."

The Westminster Assembly was not wholly occupied with polemical discussions. Serious and substantial labours were allotted to the members. The religious atmosphere around them was charged with the elements of controversy and discord. The people, unused to any kind of parochial superintendence, no sooner found themselves loosed from the iron yoke of despotism, by which they had been so long muzzled and silenced, indulged in all manner of heretical vagaries. In the parliamentary army, where every private felt himself at liberty, in religious matters, to march according to his own time and tune, independent of all order or organisation, the most extraordinary license prevailed. Sects and parties innumerable swarmed over the land. The Assembly of Divines had their hands full of work. The midnight chimes of Westminster would find them deeply immersed in their studies, some engaged on committees, others busy on controversial writings, or conning sermons to be preached before parliament or in city churches. In these labours the Scots commissioners had their full share.* The main business in the assembly con-

* To this period we owe Henderson's "Order and Government of the Church of Scotland;" Rutherford's "Divine Right of Church Government," "Free Disputation against Pretended Liberty of Conscience," &c.; Baillie's "Dissuasive against the Errors of the Times," &c.; Gillespie's "Aaron's Rod," &c.; "The Hundred and Eleven Propositions," besides a variety of other treatises.

sisted in the compilation of those formularies since so well known as the Westminster Standards; and as the bishops had early retired from the assembly, great harmony prevailed among the members that remained, especially in regard to doctrinal questions.

The Confession of Faith was first submitted to parliament under the title of "The Humble Advice of the Assembly of Divines, now by authority of Parliament sitting at Westminster, concerning a Confession of Faith," and was passed in December 1646. Next followed the two Catechisms—the Shorter in November 1647, and the Larger in 1648. While the Scottish Confession bears the impress of John Knox, and the Thirty-nine Articles that of Melancthon, the Westminster Confession, substantially the same in doctrine, bears unmistakably the stamp of the Dutch theology in the sharp distinctions, logical forms, and juridical terms into which the reformed doctrine had gradually moulded itself under the red heat of the Arminian and Socinian controversies. The same remark applies to the Catechisms, which were prepared simultaneously with the Confession. The Shorter Catechism has generally been viewed as an abbreviation of the Larger. But, in point of fact, the Larger Catechism was not prepared till some time after the Shorter, of which it was evidently intended to form an amplification and exposition. Both are inimitable as theological summaries; though, when it is considered that to comprehend them would imply an acquaintance with

the whole circle of dogmatic and controversial divinity, it may be doubted whether either of them is adapted to the capacity of childhood. But if too little regard has been paid, in former days, to the intelligent training of our youth in such catechisms, the objection is pushed too far when it is held that, without a full scientific understanding of its doctrines, it is useless to acquire familiarity with their phraseology and contents. The pupil must learn the rudiments of Greek and Latin long before he can comprehend the use of them, or apply them as a key to unlock the treasures of ancient learning. And experience has shown that few who have been carefully instructed in our Shorter Catechism have failed to discover the advantage of becoming acquainted in early life, even as a task, with that admirable "form of sound words."

Many have been curious to know the particular authorship of these formularies; but though the task of compilation must have fallen into the hands of individuals belonging to the various committees intrusted with them, all that we can gather from the minutes of the assembly is, that some one, in the name of the rest, "presents their report," and that "the assembly proceeded in debate" upon it. Incidentally, we learn that the preparation of the Confession and the Catechisms largely devolved on Dr Anthony Tuckney, vice-chancellor of Cambridge, a divine of great erudition, and author of several works. He held a high place in the esteem of his brethren; and an

anecdote is told of him which reflects credit on his integrity and good sense. Some members of parliament having requested him, in the usual style of the day, to pay regard to "the truly godly" in his elections at the university, Dr Tuckney replied, "No man has a greater respect than I have to the truly godly; but I am determined to choose none but *scholars*. They may deceive me in their godliness; they cannot in their scholarship."* Dr Reynolds, afterwards bishop of Norwich, Dr Arrowsmith, and Mr Palmer, had evidently a share in the framing of these standards. The metrical version of the Psalms, being substantially the same still used in Scotland, was executed by Mr Francis Rous, a member of the House of Commons, and lay-assessor in the assembly.†

The original intention of parliament was simply to make such alterations on the English liturgy as might satisfy the main scruples of the puritans.‡ Something

* "Dr Anthony Tuckney had a considerable hand in the preparation of the Westminster Confession and Catechisms" (Palmer's Noncon. Mem., i. 266). "He is affirmed to have had a great hand in framing the Confession and Catechisms, and particularly to have drawn the exposition of the Commandments in the Larger Catechism" (Salter's Pref. to Letters between Dr Tuckney and Dr Whichcote, in 1651). "Many of the answers in the Larger Catechism, and particularly the exquisite exposition of the Commandments, I am informed were his, and were continued, for the most part, in the very words that he brought in" (Calamy's Continuation, p. 115). Let the reader only consult his answer to the word "Remember," in the Fourth Commandment.

† Salter's Preface, *ut sup.* xiv.

‡ "The Lords and Commons do declare that they intend due and necessary reformation of the government and liturgy of the church,

of this kind seems to have been expected by our Scots commissioners, who were prepared to give up their own "Book of Common Order," for the sake of uniformity.* It soon appeared, however, that the Westminster divines were opposed to all liturgical services; and by their advice the English parliament, February 21, 1645, "judged it necessary that the Book of Common Prayer be abolished, and that the Directory for the Public Worship of God be established and observed in all the churches within this kingdom." Some, no doubt, will regret that the regular decency of the English service should have been dealt with in this spirit of wholesale innovation. Experience however has shown that while many who have been trained to the use of extemporary prayer may, from various motives, be induced to prefer a liturgy, it is seldom that those who have once thrown off the restraints of liturgical services evince a disposition to return to them. The Book of Common Prayer, like a venerable old abbey, still offers attractions to persons of taste, from early or antique associations; but it was found unfitted to accommodate the earnest and growing life

and to take away nothing in the one or the other but what shall be evil and justly offensive, or at least unnecessary and burdensome."—*Scobal's Collection of Acts, &c.*, April 9, 1642.

* Alexander Henderson, writing in 1643, says, "We are not to conceive that they will embrace our form. A new form must be set down for us all; and although we should never come to this unity in religion and uniformity of worship, yet my desire is to see what form England shall pitch upon before we publish ours."—*Baillie's Letters*, old edition, vol. ii. p. 305.

of society. The "Directory," again, as it furnished no forms of prayer, soon fell into desuetude; and it has only served the purpose of launching non-episcopal churches from the uniform liturgic canal into the open sea of unread and unrestricted prayer.*

The most singular fact connected with the history of these standards is their short-lived existence in England, where they originated, when compared with the long duration of their use and authority in Scotland, in America, and wherever the presbyterian church has extended. It seems strange that while the Scottish church was so ready to abandon her simple confession and rudimental catechisms for the more abstruse productions of the English divines, to exchange her "Book of Common Order" for a "Directory," and her old psalter, accompanied with its tunes in four parts, to which they had been so long accustomed, for a new psalm-book without any tunes whatever, composed by an Independent of the Long Parliament, †—the English presbyterians, on

* At the same time it is to be regretted that the rules of the "Directory" are not so well attended to as they deserve by those who acknowledge it as a standard. Dr Halley speaks of it in high terms, and adds, "I cannot imagine any religious service more solemn, more appropriate, or more edifying, than one conducted by an able, judicious, and devout minister, according to the rules and in the spirit of the Directory."—*Halley's Lancashire*, i. 454.

† Among other narrow and precisian notions which the presbyterians seem to have caught from the sectaries of the parliament, one was a prejudice among some of them against the singing of psalms as part of the divine service. On June 6, 1649, the provincial assembly of London agrees that "singing of psalms shall not be enumerated

the contrary, should have so soon practically given up the use of these new standards. Still stranger does it appear that, while in Scotland the Westminster standards were not only received by the church, and sanctioned by acts of the Scottish parliament, but solemnly sworn and subscribed throughout the whole land, the English parliament, by whose advice they had been framed, never gave them any legal sanction, and that the English divines by whom they were composed never subscribed them, nor intended that they should be subscribed as terms of ministerial or christian communion.* The difference may be partly accounted for by national idiosyncrasies, and partly by the extreme desire of the Scots to obtain that "covenanted uniformity" for which England was not yet prepared, but which Scotland, with a church fully organised and a parliament favourably disposed, regarded as the sheet-anchor of her safety,

among the substantial of church government." This confirms a statement in Nicoll's Diary, which some have deemed incredible, that the practice of singing psalms was actually suspended in Edinburgh for some years at this time. There was a strong propensity in Scotland to follow the English presbyterians, which appeared even in their adopting their reading of the line at the singing of the psalm, an innovation which so astonished Mr Pepys on his entering Dr Bates' church.

* In a petition to parliament from the provincial assembly of London, June 1648, they pray that the Confessions and Catechisms may be established, and that parliament "ordain and enjoin that they may be publicly taught and learned throughout the whole kingdom." It does not appear that any such ordinance was ever passed. The Shorter Catechism, however, seems to have been very generally used in presbyterian churches. Thomas Watson's "Body of Divinity" and various other works, are founded on that catechism.

and to which afterwards, as a sacred engagement, she resolutely clung, in hope and against hope, in days of darkness and storm.* In England presbytery had yet to be organised, and at every step it encountered conflicting and neutralising influences.

At length, June 29, 1647, the English parliament ordained "that all parishes within England and Wales be brought under the government of congregational, classical, provincial, and national churches, according to the form of presbyterial government agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster." The country was to be divided into provinces instead of dioceses, and the provinces again into classes or presbyteries; and from these representatives were to constitute a national assembly. Thus presbytery became the national establishment in England. And thus English presbytery, when in the ascendant, may be said to have sprung out of the bosom of the church of England. It was no exotic plant, but indigenous to English soil. It came neither from Geneva, nor Frankfort, nor Scotland, but from her own clergy, many of whom had long held it in theory, and who, as soon as the arm of arbitrary power was withdrawn, grew of their own accord into presbyterians. What is more, English presbytery had a character of its own, and it may be said to have left its peculiar stamp on the religion of Scotland.

* See Note C. to this chapter—The Elizabethan and the Covenanted Uniformity.

NOTES TO CHAPTER V.

NOTE A.

MS. Minutes of the Westminster Assembly.

These minutes are preserved in Dr Williams' library, now in Queen's Square, London. They consist of three folio volumes, the first part being written in an indistinct and almost illegible hand, being evidently the scroll minutes taken in the assembly by Mr Adoniram Byfield, the scribe. The other part is a transcript written in a fair hand. The records commence at session 45, August 4, 1643, and close at March 25, 1652. These minutes afford a rather unsatisfactory report of the proceedings; and the want of experience in drawing up church records is very apparent. It is no doubt to be regretted that those minutes should have come into the hands of Unitarians; but the directors of the library afford every facility for taking extracts; and we are happy to learn that a complete transcript of them is now in course of preparation, under the care of a committee appointed by the General Assembly of the Established Church of Scotland.

NOTE B.

The Solemn League and Covenant.

This deed is quite unprecedented and unparalleled in the annals of religion. Creeds and confessions have held sway over whole peoples, in virtue of fresh adherents to them from age to age. But the solemn league sprung up at once, stamped its image on the age which gave it birth, and stands forth to this day as the deed of a nation—done rightly or wrongly, for good or for evil, as it may be judged—but done, like an act of murder or an

act of martyrdom in the case of the individual man—never to be recalled ; done either ever afterwards to be repented of, or ever after to be commemorated. In Scotland it assumed the veritable form of a national deed ; and in England and Ireland it was certainly subscribed and sworn by persons of all ranks and classes. What is more, it cannot, properly speaking, be repeated. Attempts indeed have been made in Scotland to reproduce it by what have been called renovations of our national covenants ; but these, being neither strictly national, nor ecclesiastical, nor personal transactions, but a mixture of the three, can only be viewed as indicating a desire to recognise the grand act. Gradually, as the normal idea of nationality faded from men's minds, or ceased to be relished, it dwindled into a species of religious service or church-vow. But while many lived who signed the covenant with their blood, it became the rallying-cry in the field and the dying testimony on the scaffold, and it has been identified in the eyes of all true Scotsmen with the cause of civil and religious liberty. Even our national bard could not stand an offensive allusion to it :—

“The solemn league and covenant
 Cost Scotland blood—cost Scotland tears ;
 But it sealed freedom's sacred cause :
 If thou 'rt a slave, indulge thy sneers.”

If, in England, this deed is not regarded as properly national, it can hardly be viewed as deprived of its nationality by the profane act of the second Charles which rescinded it. It has endured whole ages and volumes of abuse ; and still, in spite of these and of modern contempt, it lifts its head, like some old ruined watch-tower, protesting against all “popery, prelacy, superstition, heresy, schism, profaneness, and whatsoever shall be found contrary to sound doctrine and the power of godliness.”

NOTE C.

The Elizabethan and the Covenanted Uniformity.

It is strange that the Westminster divines should have inaugurated their reformation under a term which must have been

peculiarly obnoxious to the English puritans, as reminding them of the Act of Uniformity under Elizabeth. We owe the expression mainly, no doubt, to the influence of Scotland, which had smarted under attempts made, both at home and from England, to infringe upon their own beloved uniformity. But nothing presents a more obvious contrast than the uniformity urged by Elizabeth and that aimed at by the Westminster Assembly. The one was an arbitrary statute of the monarch, enforced by civil enactment ; the other was a voluntary compact, engaged in by all classes in the nation. The one aimed at a stereotyped monotony of lifeless rites and ceremonies ; the other, at a harmonised unity of living faith in the truths of revelation. The one was a political machine for compressing the lieges into a dead lump of organised matter ; the other was a plan, not without the sanction of scripture and church precedents, to unite all in confessing, "with one mind and one mouth," the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. After all, the uniformity of Elizabeth was one-sided, leaving everything except "common prayer" unfixed and undetermined ; presenting a *facsimile* of the Corinthian church, rebuked by the apostle when he says, "How is it then, brethren, when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation ?" On the contrary, the covenanted uniformity, while it left the ordinance of prayer unshackled in its phraseology, laid down rules for its practice, which have been so uniformly followed in presbyterian churches, that any departure from them in matter, order, or arrangement, would be disliked as innovation ; and furnished, at the same time, one form of doctrine in its confession, one form of praise in its psalter or hymnal, approved of by the church, and one form of administration in its discipline and government.

CHAPTER VI

ENGLISH PRESBYTERY DURING THE COMMONWEALTH.

A.D. 1647-1662.

" She openeth her mouth with wisdom ;
and in her tongue is the law of kindness.
She looketh well to the ways of her household,
and eateth not the bread of idleness.

Her children arise up, and call her blessed ;
her husband also, and he praiseth her.
Many daughters have done virtuously,
but thou excellest them all.

Give her of the fruit of her hands :
And let her own works praise her in the gates."

Proverbs xxxi. 26-31.

CHAPTER VI.

A. D. 1647-1662.

English Presbytery under the Commonwealth—Provincial Assembly of London—Execution of Christopher Love—Lancashire Presbyterians.

MANY were the antagonistic influences with which the presbyterian establishment, born in such troublous days, had to struggle. It had to contend with the prelatical party, watching their opportunity of reprisal; with the independents, who feared that their separate churches would be swamped in a national establishment; and with the sectaries, who aimed at a general *mêlée* of all parties. But other obstacles stood in the way of success. Though the outward forms of presbytery were set up, by no persuasion could parliament be induced to lend any civil sanction to the decisions of the church courts, even in matters within their proper sphere; they retained in their own hands an Erastian power, as the supreme court of appeal; so that none could be even excluded from the Lord's table for ecclesiastical offences without having recourse to the civil courts. On no subject, we are aware, have

the presbyterians been more severely censured by all parties than for their intolerance. From the days of Milton, who, in his famous epigram, ascribes to them a design to "ride us with a classic hierarchy," and to "adjure the civil sword to force our consciences, that Christ made free," concluding with the adage—

"New presbyter is but old priest writ large,"

it has become common to regard them as a synod of ecclesiastical sachems, bent on reducing England to a tyranny worse even than that of Rome, inasmuch as they would strip men of their spiritual freedom without permitting them the compensation of enjoying their worldly diversions. That some of them protested against the doctrine of toleration as then propounded by the sectaries, and made use of very unmeasured terms and untenable arguments, cannot be disputed;* and their unceasing demands for a parliamentary establishment of their discipline was, to say the least of it, unseemly, and capable of misconstruction. The question of toleration will afterwards come under our notice. Meanwhile it admits of being shown that even the hypothetical intolerance of some of our presbyterian fathers differed from Romish or prelatic tyranny. It implied no claim to infallibility, and, in point of fact, it never led them to persecute; it never applied the rack to

* We refer, of course, to such treatises as that of Samuel Rutherford (the "Rotherford" of Milton's epigram), called "A Free Disputation against Pretended Liberty of Conscience," and that of Thomas Edwards (whom he terms elsewhere "shallow Edwardes") entitled "Gangræna," and "The Casting Down of the Last and Strongest Hold of Satan; or, a Treatise against Toleration."

the flesh, or slaked its vengeance in blood. To charge them with a desire to impose their covenant and confession upon all classes, under civil penalties, is still more unjust to the men and their principles. If there is one point in which the English presbyterians can be said to have failed, it was in their extreme reluctance to impose subscription to their creed, even as a term of ministerial communion. So sorely had they smarted from oaths and subscriptions under the régime of Laud and high-church prelacy, that they had conceived a rooted aversion to all sorts of "imposition," name and thing.* The consequences of this aversion will afterwards appear. Baillie says—"But if once the government of Christ were set up among us (meaning the establishment of presbytery in England), we know not what would impede it, *by the sword of God alone, without any secular violence*, to banish out of the land these spirits of error, in all meekness, humility, and love; by the force of truth, convincing and satisfying the minds of the seduced. Episcopal courts were never fitted for the reclaiming of minds. Their prisons, their fines, their pillories, their nose-slittings, their ear-cuttings, their cheek-burnings, did but hold down the flame to break out in season with the greater rage. But the reformed presbytery doth proceed *in a spiritual method*, eminently fitted for the gaining of hearts; they go on with the offending party with all respect;

* See Note B. to this chapter—Dr A. Tuckney and Richard Baxter on subscription to the Confession.

they deal with him in all gentleness, from weeks to months, from months sometimes to years, before they come near to any censure.”*

In only two of the provinces, namely, London and Lancashire, was the presbyterian discipline fully established. The London provincial assembly commenced its sittings May 3, 1647, first in a crypt of St Paul's, and subsequently in Sion College. In the heart of the city, not far from London Wall, and within a dingy courtyard, surrounded by a few almshouses, stands the library of Sion College. It is now an appurtenance of the established church, and contains a collection of old books, to which few modern additions have been made. Strangely enough, the “Records of the London Provincial Assembly,” in a large folio manuscript, are still preserved, under clasp and key, in the episcopal archives of this library. † Here, then, did the fathers of English presbytery sit in grave council during the stormy days of the Commonwealth. On consulting these records, we do not find that the business transacted was of much interest or importance; but they are highly suggestive of the difficulties with which the new government had to contend. Two grievances stand conspicuous. First, they complain of the insufficient maintenance of the ministry, which, they say, “comes far short of a competency, and that much shortened by the general

* Dissuasive from the Errors of the Time, pref. viii.; see also Rutherford's Divine Right, p. 607.

† See Note A. to this chapter—Records of the Provincial Assembly of London in Sion College Library.

unjust withholding of it, notwithstanding the legal provision for the payment thereof." The Long Parliament was much more intent upon securing to their own use, or that of the state, the benefices of the episcopal clergy, than on making any suitable or permanent provision for the support of divine ordinances. Nothing could be more untrue than the charge, so often brought against the presbyterians by their embittered enemies, that they sought to enrich themselves with the spoils of the church. Many of the older incumbents had livings of their own; and the more learned among them were appointed to offices in the universities; but the want of a competency for the urgent demands of a whole national establishment must have been severely felt. The idea of resorting to the voluntary exertions of the people as a stated supply for the national ministry, was then an unknown and untried experiment.* Much, too, has been said, with as little truth, of their severe treatment of the

* "Voluntaryism," says one, "cannot properly be identified with puritanism. The leading puritans neither advocated nor countenanced that principle." (Stoughton's *Ecol. Hist. of England—Church of the Restoration*, i. 8.) Even Dr Owen contended for the continued obligation of tithes. Some of the independents, however, who held peculiar views, were obliged to look for support from those of their own class. John Goodwin, the arminian, laughed at the presbyterians for complaining that "the orthodox have but short commons," and in one of his violent tirades asks, "Have independent ministers any other commons or means of subsistence than what is the abomination of presbyterian souls to think of, I mean the benevolence, the free and voluntary allowance of their people?"—*The Youngling Elder*, p. 110.

episcopal incumbents. Bishop Hall was confined a few days in prison, but was treated with the utmost leniency. Dr Thomas Fuller was indebted to Howe for being kept in his living. "Sir," said the humorous historian, when brought before "the triers," "you may observe I am a pretty corpulent man, and I am to go through a pretty strait passage. I beg you will be so kind as give me a shove and help me through." And, indeed, many of the prelatists were permitted quietly to retain their livings, and even those dismissed for scandal and incompetency were allowed a fifth of their incomes.

Another source of weakness under which English presbytery had now to labour was the absence of a competent body of men to act as ruling elders. The Records of the London province abound with complaints on this subject. In spite of every effort, some of the largest churches remained without any elders, while others had only two or three. This indisposition to accept of office is mainly to be traced to the disturbed state of the times. The expulsion of the presbyterian members from parliament, usually known as "Colonel Pride's purge," and the abolition of the House of Lords, many of whom were friendly to presbyterianism, may be said to have blighted the prospects of its establishment in England. The lay element in its constitution is essential to the efficient working of the presbyterial system. In a decaying state of the church it sinks down to zero; but the

English presbyterian establishment had to commence its work from infancy bereft of its right arm—the christian eldership. Unlike Scotland, where parliament formed a tower of strength, and where nobles, barons, and gentlemen gathered around the blue banner of the covenant, like staff-officers round their general, proud to take their part in the councils of the church, English presbytery was denuded both of the support of parliament and of the patronage of the nobility, the gentry, and the landowners. The people, left without their natural leaders, shrank back, helpless as sheep without a shepherd; and the church courts, thus left in the hands of doctors and divines, better acquainted with books than with business, dwindled into little more than clerical meetings for prayer and consultation.

To these sources of internal weakness, with which the presbyterians of the Commonwealth had to contend, must be added the perpetual distraction of controversy with their chief rivals—the congregationalists. It must be granted that the leading ministers of that party distinguished themselves during this period by their moderation as well as by their high christian character. With such men as John Owen, John Howe, and Thomas Goodwin, it must have been difficult indeed to pick a quarrel or to get angry in debate. In fact, they lived at peace with their brethren; but at a time when both parliament and the army were filled with men claiming the name of independents, it was impossible

to avoid coming into conflict with very different characters. The mischief of such encounters did not end merely in mutual alienation. They diverted the minds of ministers from their proper work, and exhausted the energy which should have been devoted to spiritual edification and church-extension. As a specimen of the multitudinous pamphlets to which these gave birth, we may refer only to one—the controversy between Mr William Jenkyn, the minister of Christ's Church, and Mr John Goodwin. Of Mr Jenkyn we will afterwards have to speak. John Goodwin is the person whom, with his usual blunt freedom, Toplady characterises as "that low and virulent Arminian, John Goodwin, the Fifth-Monarchy man," and of whom the milder Calamy remarks, "He was a man by himself, was against every man, and had every man almost against him." Goodwin was the first assailant, in a pamphlet entitled, "Sion College Visited;" to this Jenkyn replied in a tract called "The Busie-Bishop, or the Visitor Visited." Goodwin answered this in "The Youngling Elder, or Novice Presbyter," and Jenkyn parried this blow in another reply, "The Blinde Guide, or the Doting Doctor." The style in which Goodwin writes may be judged of from the title-page of his "Youngling Elder," which, he says, was "compiled more especially for the christian instruction and reducement of William Jenkyn, a young presbyter, lately gone astray, like a lost sheep, from the ways of

modesty, conscience, and truth: occasioned by a late pamphlet, containing very little in it but what is chiefly reducible to one or both of those two unhappy predicaments of youth—ignorance and arrogance; clearly demonstrated by I. G. (John Goodwin), a servant of God and man in the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ!” To all this Jenkyn replies that Goodwin’s pamphlet “consists of such unmanlike scoldings that he hath rendered himself the shame of his party, and the scorn of his opposites!”

Yet those meetings in Sion College were not wholly without their fruits. They served to centralise the counsels of the presbyterians; and during their brief régime they performed two important services to the presbyterian cause. The first was a demonstration of presbyterian loyalty. They joined in a solemn protest and remonstrance against the execution of the king, beseeching parliament, by arguments founded upon religion and the constitution, “that they might not *dare* to draw upon themselves and the kingdom the blood of the sovereign.” That no such document should have come from the independents is not surprising; but the conduct of the prelatical party in keeping in the background at this fearful crisis affords a striking contrast to their zeal in the cause of “the royal martyr” after General Monk had made it safe to be loyal, and when the church had sanctified the martyrdom of Charles as a holiday. To their intense grief and dismay, the presbyterians beheld the sad spectacle,

when the "grey discrowned head" of the monarch was exhibited by the executioner on the scaffold at Whitehall. The scene was witnessed by Philip Henry, the father of Matthew Henry, the commentator, who had been brought up with the children of the royal family; "whereat," says Philip, "there arose such a dismal, universal groan among the thousands of people within sight of it, such as he never heard before, and desired he might never hear the like again, nor wish to see such a cause for it!"

A more important service was performed by the London provincial assembly in the preparation of two works—one being a Vindication of the presbyterial government, and another a Defence of the presbyterial ministry.* These two treatises may be regarded as the judicial deliverances of the assembly, being engrossed at full length in their manuscript records. Having been thereafter published, they form a more elaborate, learned, and complete defence of presbytery than has ever appeared. They are characterised by great mildness and catholicity, and they have never yet been answered.

While the provincial assembly was engaged in these peaceful and useful labours, a dark cloud burst over their heads, which must have filled them with mingled sorrow and alarm. We refer to the public

* These works are respectively entitled, "*Jus Divinum Regiminis Ecclesiastici* ; or, The Divine Right of Church Government," and "*Jus Divinum Ministerii Evangelici* ; or, The Divine Right of the Gospel Ministry." Published by the Provincial Assembly of London. 1654.

execution of one of their number, Mr Christopher Love, minister of St Lawrence, Jewry. Our notices of this excellent man are scanty, but from all we can learn, he was a pious and faithful minister, and held in high reputation as a preacher and an author of practical writings. So early as 1645, before the breaking out of the civil war, he was commissioned by the parliament to preach at Newcastle.* This commission he fulfilled; and on one occasion, preaching in Newcastle, he chose as his text Jeremiah xlii. 16: "Then it shall come to pass, that the sword which ye feared shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt." Sir John Murley, governor of the town, "being informed of it, swore that the text was worse than the sermon, and boasted of the present security of the nation. But Mr Love proved more of a prophet than he."† In 1651, when Cromwell was engaged in suppressing the rising in Scotland in favour of Charles II., Mr Love became involved in some correspondence with the Scottish friends of that monarch, which he confessed he had heard when read in his house, but, as he said with great simplicity, "I was ignorant of the danger that I now see I was in." He was charged with plotting the subversion of the republican government. At his trial, the young minister pleaded that, in support-

* "By order of the Lords and Commons, May 26, 1645, Mr Christopher Love, if he can conveniently go thither, is directed to be sent to preach the word of God at Newcastle-upon-Tyne."

† MS. Life of Barnes of Newcastle.

ing the claims of Charles Stuart he only followed out his oath in the solemn league. "I have been kept several weeks in close prison," he said, "and am now arraigned for my life, and likely to suffer at the hands of those for whom I have done and suffered so much, and who have lifted up their hands with me in the same covenant." He solemnly declared that he had neither written nor sent any letters to Scotland; but boldly avowed that the proceedings in favour of the king were agreeable to his judgment, and for the good of the nation. And adopting the language of the prophet, he concluded by beseeching them not to bring upon themselves, through his death, the guilt of "innocent blood." Neither his pleadings, however, nor the eloquent defence of his counsel, Matthew Hale, could avert the sentence of death.

The efforts made by Mary Love to save her husband's life form an affecting episode. With that courage which is inspired by a wife's affection, and which not unfrequently converts the timid woman into a heroine, she laid a petition before parliament, imploring pardon for the prisoner, and "praying that the God of heaven would bow the hearts of England's rulers to show mercy." Yet, fearing the worst, this admirable woman wrote to her husband in strains of ardent tenderness, telling him to be comforted; that "death was but a little stroke;" and "remember," she said, "though thou mayest eat thy dinner with bitter herbs, yet thou shalt have a sweet supper with Christ that night." In

the same spirit of resignation he responded, assuring her that, "as there was little between him and death, so there was little between him and heaven." A second petition from Mrs Love entreated that, though her husband might not be thought worthy to breathe English air, he might at least have leave to sigh out his sorrows in some distant clime. A third petition produced no effect, nor a fourth, though in that the broken-hearted woman, throwing herself at the feet of the inexorable judges, cried, "Your desolate handmaid waiteth, with all humility and earnest expectation at your doors, beseeching you not to forget to show mercy to your petitioner, and her tender babes. Be graciously pleased to prevent this dreadful blow. Whilst you are propagating the gospel in New England, let my dying husband, as a prophet from the dead, be sent to endeavour the conversion of the poor Indians." The last words of Christopher Love to his brave, loving Mary, were—"Farewell! I will call thee wife no more; I shall see thy face no more; yet I am not much troubled; for I am going to meet the bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom I shall be eternally married." In vain were these intercessions enforced by his friends in several parishes of London, and by fifty-four ministers; it was resolved that an example should be made, and all that could be procured was a reprieve for one month.

At the end of this period he met his fate on Tower Hill, on the 22d of August, together with Mr Gibbons,

his companion, and made a long speech, maintaining that he had been convicted upon insufficient evidence, but boldly avouching his principles as a covenanter and a presbyterian. Mounting the scaffold with great intrepidity, and taking off his hat, he said, "I am for a regulated mixed monarchy, which I judge to be one of the best governments in the world. I am against screwing up monarchy into tyranny, as much as against those who would pull it down into anarchy. Neither would I be looked upon as owning the present government. I die with my judgment against it. I would die as a covenant-keeper rather than live as a covenant-breaker." And repeating the words of the apostle, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand," &c., the presbyterian hero laid his head on the fatal block. Ashe, Calamy, and Manton attended their brother on the scaffold; and Baxter says, "he died with as great alacrity, and fearless quietude, and freedom of speech, as if he had gone to bed." Manton preached in St Lawrence Church, where Love had been incumbent, a funeral sermon on the text which he had uttered with his dying lips, which was published under the title, "The Saint's Triumph in Death," in which he paid a high tribute to the piety and excellence of his departed brother.

Christopher Love had stood on the scaffold under a bright autumnal sky; but soon after the deadly axe had fallen, the heavens became overcast, and thunder and lightning raged all that night. At a

time when nature was interpreted by each contending faction as speaking on its side, no wonder that royalist presbyterians interpreted this to mean that God was angry at what had been done; and no wonder that republican independents replied, "No; it is a mark of divine judgment against implacable apostasy." * He died, no doubt, a victim to the royal cause; but no Scottish covenanter who sang his last psalm in the Grassmarket of Edinburgh, or was shot down on his native moors, by the dragoons of Claverhouse, with his good sword in his hand and his bible in his breast, ever shed his blood "for Christ's crown and covenant" more truly or more nobly than did Christopher Love on the Tower Hill of London.

The execution of Mr Love was no doubt intended as an example to overawe the presbyterians. The policy of Cromwell was throughout inimical to the progress of presbyterianism. He was jealous of all popular councils, whether in church or state, parliaments or synods. He had just dispersed the general assembly of the Scottish church at the point of the bayonet. And when the supreme power devolved into the hands of the Protector and his army, matters assumed a still gloomier aspect. We may sometimes envy the gift of Asmodeus, in the French tale, of

* Neal's Puritans (Toulmin's ed.), ii. 338-342; Stoughton's Church of the Commonwealth, ii. 46-48. Mr Love's sermons were published after his death, with Manton's sermon prefixed. It is reported that Cromwell had sent a reprieve for him from Scotland; but that the post was rifled by some cavaliers on the road, who, on discovering by whom the reprieve was sent, and for whom it was intended, tore it in pieces.

penetrating into the closets of our fathers at this critical juncture; but no diary tells their secret thoughts, no gossiping Pepys or Evelyn lifts the curtain and discloses their inward life. One scene only can we record. Mr Bowles, the son of Oliver Bowles, one of the Westminster divines, pays a visit one evening to Sir Harry Vane. The conversation, judging from the date, might refer to the case of Christopher Love, and the independent statesman would doubtless be lavish in his promises; but the presbyterian divine saw through them. On taking leave, Sir Harry followed him with a candle to the head of the stair. Mr Bowles desired him not to give himself that trouble. "Nay," said Sir Harry, "I will see you down." "Indeed, Sir Harry," said Mr Bowles, "I believe you would see us all down!"—"merrily intending," says our authority, "that if Sir Harry Vane might hold the candle, ordinances, orders, and forms of worship should all go down."*

The last entry on the records of the London provincial assembly is dated 28th May 1660, the day preceding that of the restoration of Charles II., when the whole city must have been ringing with boisterous mirth and the glee of preparation for his triumphal entry; and the only member present to witness the obsequies of the provincial assembly in that dingy and deserted chamber in Sion College is Dr Lazarus Seaman, the "scribe"—*ultimus Romanorum*—who

* MS. by Mr Barnes of Newcastle.

signs the last page—all the rest of his brethren having gone to worship the rising sun. With a sigh of regret, mingled with feelings of apprehension, the solemn presbyter closes the volume, and carries it home to his own library.*

In no part of England was the cause of presbytery more cordially welcomed, nowhere did it spread its roots more widely, and nowhere were its adherents more distinguished for their talents and energy, than in Lancashire, the only other province where presbytery was fully established. The soil was prepared for its reception through the labours of many excellent ministers who flourished during the reigns of Elizabeth and James, and who, though calvinistic in their judgment and nonconforming in practice, were permitted to labour unmolested by prelates of pious and accommodating temper. The man most distinguished for his services in the establishment of presbytery in Lancashire was Mr Richard Heyrick, warden of Christ's Church, Manchester. Naturally lofty and imperious, with sympathies clerical and churchman-like, in some respects less of a presbyterian than his neighbours, and inclined towards the Anglican service, but a zealous and even passionate partisan, he took an active part in the settlement of presbyterian government. Though a member of the Assembly, he thought he could better serve the cause by working

* Records of the London Provincial Assembly, see Note A. to this chapter.

in Lancashire than by sitting in Westminster. Detesting the sectaries almost as much as he did papists and prelatists, he got up a petition to parliament against these intruders, praying for a uniform government to ensure their suppression. He was soon destined to suffer from the parliament whose aid he had invoked. Sequestrators having been sent down to claim the property of the church in order to disburse it in their own way, Heyrick resolutely refused to surrender the charter-chest, to give up the key, or allow the perusal of a single deed. The republican soldiers having marched upon Manchester, found the chapter-house shut up, and the chest locked by the indomitable warden, who stood before the door and boldly charged them with robbery, but was compelled to yield to the soldiery, who not only carried off the chest with its contents, but defaced the costly architecture of the church, broke its painted windows, and demolished its screens and sculptured monuments. Thus "the most beautiful ecclesiastical edifice, which had been protected during the perils of the reformation, and afterwards through the perils of the civil war by its presbyterian warden, was bereaved of its rich ornaments and time-hallowed memorials by the fanaticism and ignorance of a preaching soldiery. Heyrick, seeing no intimate connection between presbyterianism and barbarism, grieved bitterly for the injury done to the beauty of the church which he dearly loved and regarded as

precious and inviolable as his own life."* The impetuosity of his temper soon involved him in more serious trials. The presbyterians of Lancashire, who were much in love with the solemn league, had been greatly uplifted by the news that Charles II. had come to Scotland, and submitted to govern as a covenanted king. With a duplicity, in comparison with which the obstinate adherence of his father to episcopacy was virtue itself, the unprincipled son had not only sworn the covenant, but submitted to the humiliation of confessing the sins of his father for having married a papist, and for having been guilty of much of the blood shed in the civil wars. Sad was their depression on the news of his defeat at Dunbar. Heyrick had gone up to London, and become involved in the correspondence with Scotland, which brought Christopher Love to the scaffold. He himself might have shared the same fate, had not powerful intercession been made in his favour.† Like the rest of his brethren, Mr Heyrick had no good will to Cromwell. They were all decided royalists, but, like their brethren in Scotland, were equally bent on the king consenting to the covenant, and dismissing all malignants from his army and council. Had these conditions been complied with, had Charles acted in England the farce of a covenanted

* "Lancashire: its Puritanism and Nonconformity," by Robert Halley, D.D., ii. 12-14.

† Walker's Sufferings of the Clergy.

king as well as he had done in Scotland, Cromwell might have had to fight a stout force of Lancashire puritans, instead of prelatists and papists, and the result might have been something very different from that of the battle of Worcester.* “Of the religious parties,” says the author we have quoted, “the presbyterians were the most powerful, being not only the most numerous, but the most united, and most easily guided and controlled by their leaders. In Lancashire, they were especially influential and subservient to their ministers. They called for a free parliament, and what call could have been more just and reasonable? They desired a limited monarchy, but the degree of limitation they were willing to leave to a freely chosen parliament. This country is under great obligation to the English presbyterians for maintaining the old constitutional liberty at great cost and suffering, while they resisted the tyranny of Charles I., the military rule which was threatening on the death of Cromwell, and the illegal assertion of prerogative by James II.” †

The minutes of the provincial assembly of Lancashire, preserved in the Cheetham Library at Manchester, bear ample testimony to the zeal and fidelity of the worthy ministers composing it. Their first object was to restore to their church the goodly order and discipline under which it had flourished in better

* Halley's Lancashire, ii. 18.

† Ibid. 92, 93.

days. While in essential features they bore a resemblance to other presbyterian churches, the Lancashire synod had some peculiarities of its own. One of these was a powerful lay element; for the elders, unlike those of London, formed two-thirds of their church courts. To these elders was intrusted the preparation of the young for admission to the Lord's table, and the general administration of discipline. These functionaries do not seem to have allowed the ordinance of parliament to remain in their hands a dead letter. Among other proposals it was ordered that all in the parish should appear before the elders to be catechised; that notice should be taken of all persons who, though not reputed ignorant or scandalous, neglected the observance of the Lord's supper; that these should first be privately admonished; that, admonition failing, their names should be published in the congregation; and that, if they continued obstinate, they should be publicly excommunicated. The good policy of this stringent regulation is very questionable, and can only be vindicated by taking into view the gross ignorance of the community. The first application of the catechetical screw to the torpid mass was followed by a loud cry of remonstrance. The people protested against submitting their moral and religious conduct to any but a regularly-ordained ministry.* In the words of Augustine, to whose

* History of Foundations in Manchester, i. 311.

authority the ministers appealed, "They became mad against the medicine that should cure their madness." It deserves to be mentioned that the Lancashire ministers were as careful in providing for the strict "superintendence of ministers and elders by the synods within their respective divisions," as for that of their congregations; that they appear to have been deeply impressed with the necessity of a Confession of Faith; that they joined with their brethren of London in pressing that it should be sanctioned as the joint confession of the three kingdoms, in pursuance of our covenant; and that they took special care that the church should be provided with a well-educated ministry.*

In one point these good men, we regret to say, went further than their brethren in London—we allude to their intolerance of the sectaries. We need only refer to a document they emitted under the title of "The Harmonious Consent." † There can be little doubt that this manifesto was the production of the redoubtable Heyrick, but it was signed by nearly all the Lancashire presbyterian ministers. A few specimens may suffice to give some idea of this

* See Note C. to this chapter—The Manchester Classis.

† It is entitled, "The Harmonious Consent of the Ministers within the County Palatine of Lancaster with their brethren the Ministers of the Province of London, in their late Testimony to the truth of Jesus Christ and to our Solemn League and Covenant: As also of the errors, heresies, and blasphemies of these times, and the toleration of them." 1648.

extraordinary document so redolent of the times:—
 “A toleration would be the putting of a sword into a madman’s hand; a cup of poison into the hand of a child; a letting loose of madmen with fire-brands in their hands; an appointing a city of refuge in men’s consciences for the devil to fly to; a laying of the stumbling-block before the blind; a proclaiming of liberty to the wolves to come into Christ’s flock to prey upon his lambs; a toleration of soul-murder (the greatest murder of all other), and for the establishing whereof damned souls in hell would accuse men on earth! It is giving Satan free liberty to set up his thresholds by God’s thresholds, his posts by God’s post, his Dagon by God’s ark.” “And therefore,” say they, “however some may conceive that in the things of the mind the sword is not put into the hands of the civil magistrate for the terror of evil-doers, yet because we judge the toleration of all kinds of opinions and professions in matters of faith (errors therein being in the number of those evil works to which the magistrate is to be a terror) to be impious and wicked, and would be a tender nurse to give suck to and cherish the foul, ugly, monstrous, and misshapen births of our times;—we do here profess that we do detest the fore-mentioned toleration.” Upon this Dr Halley remarks, that “on the subject of toleration, then slowly making way among some of the London clergy, nothing more horrible was ever put upon paper by reli-

gionists of any sort." This is rather a severe judgment. "The Harmonious Consent" certainly belies its title, for instead of breathing harmony or consent, it sounds more like the trumpet of battle and the crash of mortal strife. Considering the times, however, it must be allowed that the assault is made with no inconsiderable dash and talent. When we meet among the subscribers of the document, amounting to eighty-four, such names as those of Richard Hollingworth of Manchester, John Angier of Denton, and Isaac Ambrose of Preston, we hesitate before ascribing to them anything so "horrible" in sentiment as that supposed to be here "put on paper." And it is with a feeling of relief that we turn to the liberal and generous apology which the congregational historian has appended to the charge. "It can be explained," he says, "only by supposing that they were frightened out of calm thought and wise consideration by the monstrous apparitions which were rising on all sides and threatening their newly-established church. The position of the presbyterian clergy was new and strange to them. They had suddenly become rulers of the church in which they had been oppressed, and they felt both their elevation and their responsibility. They saw that the cause for which they had contended so long and suffered so much was exposed to new perils and unexpected disasters. They acted as if they had been stricken with panic in a great emergency, when their most sacred interests were exposed to

imminent hazards of which they had little knowledge and no experience.”*

At the same time, we must not run away with the impression that the presbyterians had no better argument on their side than a vague panic. While the more moderate and educated independents were opposed almost as much as the presbyterians to unlimited toleration,† the wilder sectaries of the time propounded theories on the subject as loose as those of their opponents were rigid. We can plainly see, in the light of the nineteenth century, that both parties were in the wrong. On the one hand, the presbyterians, in their zeal for truth and unity, but borrowing their ideas from the supernatural government of Jehovah under the old economy, when “rebellion” against his law was “as witchcraft,” and “stubbornness” in disobeying his commands was “as iniquity and idolatry,” erred in assigning to the civil ruler the province of the Almighty, who alone can punish sin as sin, and made no distinction between religious error and civil crime. The sectaries, on the other hand, in their zeal for independence, identified toleration of errorists with the recognition of error. It was not enough for them

* Dr Halley's Lancashire, vol. i. pp. 468-474.

† Thus Dr Owen had his sixteen “fundamentals,” to the open deniers of which he would allow no toleration; and he held that “the supreme magistrate in a commonwealth professing the religion of Christ ought to exert his legislative and executive power for furthering the profession of the faith and worship, and *ought to restrain and coerce such principles and practices as were contrary to them.*”—*Stoughton's Eccl. Hist.—Church of the Restoration*, i. 30, 31.

that all persecuting laws should be expunged from the statute-book. They made no distinction between an unlicensed state and a legalised system of spiritual prostitution. The law, according to them, must take the heretical nuisance, alike with the purity of truth, under its direct and fostering care.

In strange contrast with the theoretical intolerance of the Lancashire presbyterians, was their practical allowance of various pastimes and recreations. The earlier puritans of the county had always mingled with their precisian scruples the sportiveness of "merry Lancashire." Nicholas Asheton, the squire of Downham, was a singular, but by no means an uncommon, specimen of "the jovial and roystering puritan." His hair was closely cropped, indeed, but his broad face, clean shaven, glowed with ruddiness and merriment, produced partly by good cheer and frequent potations, partly by the outdoor exercises of fox-hunting, otter-hunting, racing, and, in fact, every sort of rural diversion. Punctual in his attendance alike at church and at the village alehouse, and as fond of singing psalms in the one place as he was of trolling his roundelays in the other, a character more remote from the Hudibras of Butler can hardly be imagined. His puritanical parson and relative, Abdias Asheton, was not behind him; for if Abdie eschewed the surplice and the cross in baptism, he had no objection to the shooting-coat, the lister, and the long bow. Their brethren, in later times, were far from being so ascetic in their notions as the puritans

of the south. As to field-sports, though they may not have joined in them, and protested against all cruel pastimes, no objections were made to hunting, hawking, fishing, and shooting. Games of chance, especially if played for money, were condemned; but bowls and billiards were commonly practised. Henry Newcome, of Manchester, would often indulge in such recreations in the afternoon with his brother ministers. Of dancing the stricter puritans of the north disapproved, though not so decidedly or generally as those of the south. "Rush-bearings" and all church festivals were condemned as popish commemorations. The drinking of the health of absent persons, as the king or queen, can scarcely be called an amusement, but it was a practice which, in Lancashire, as elsewhere, the puritans steadily opposed. At the great rejoicings in Manchester for the restoration of monarchy, none were more happy and hearty than the presbyterian ministers; yet Heyrick and Newcome, who, in their boundless exultation, forgot puritan moderation, were grieved and offended, not with the quantity of wine drunk in the streets, but with its being drunk to the health of the king, for whose health, however, they devoutly prayed. A story is told of Mr Bruen, whose conduct was watched with much curiosity when a health was proposed to the prince at a great public banquet. The mild and gentle puritan merely said, "You may drink to his health; I will pray for it, and

drink for my own, and so I wish you may do for yours.”*

That sober style of cheerful mirth, mingled with a habitual looking up to “the great Taskmaster’s eye,” which distinguished the primitive puritans of Lancashire at this period, cannot be better exemplified than in the account of Oliver Heywood’s marriage. He married Elizabeth, daughter of John Angier. First, they were publicly betrothed in church, at the close of a day spent in solemn prayer and fasting, when Mr Nathanael Rathband preached from Matt. i. 18. A month after this, the marriage took place at Denton Chapel, April 1655, on which occasion Mr Harrison, of Ashton, preached from Eph. v. 31. “Nearly a hundred persons were then entertained in a decent and sober manner at Angier’s table; ‘for,’ said he, ‘I love to have a marriage like a marriage,’ taking for his example the attendance of Christ at the marriage of Cana in Galilee.”† Not exactly “like a marriage” in our day certainly; but perhaps more jovial at the close than Philip Henry would have liked, who sent off his daughters on their marriage-day, “not as Laban would have done his, ‘with mirth, tabret, and songs,’ but with prayers, tears, and good wishes!”

* Lancashire, by Dr Halley, vol. i. pp. 181, 202, 215. Seldom have the presbyterians of Lancashire been treated more candidly than in the lively pages of this writer, to whose researches I am indebted for most of the facts above related.

† Memoirs of Oliver Heywood, by Richard Slate, p. 36.

Upon the whole, the presbyterian ministers of Lancashire appear to have been men of, no doubt, varied talents, but all of deep-toned piety, and of irreproachable morals; their zeal, though sometimes mistaken, was sincere and disinterested; and had they not been checkmated by the most extraordinary complication of parties in the most distracted period of England's history, they might have accomplished a great work, and perhaps altered the destinies of the nation. They formed a phalanx, pervaded by the same spirit, compact and covenanted under the same banner, being uniformly stout presbyterians, as much opposed to popery and prelacy on the one hand, as to independency and sectarianism on the other. In their political principles they were equally unanimous, having opposed Charles I. in his misrule, but being now ready to welcome his son to the throne—royalists all of them to a man. Among their leaders were such men as the grave Hollingworth, the impetuous Heyrick, the peaceful Angier, the eloquent Newcome, the heavenly-minded Ambrose. Their congregations were numerous, and devoted to their pastors. There was hardly more than one congregational pastor of any note in Lancashire, and he, Mr Samuel Eaton, who came from New England, was friendly and favourable. Their people were governed by an orderly regimen, under office-bearers of their own choosing, and an organisation hitherto unknown in that part of the kingdom. But between republicans and royalists

they lived in the midst of perpetual alarms. The ministers were annoyed by the preaching soldiery of Cromwell, and their people were massacred by the unrelenting violence of the Cavaliers. Between the two, the presbyterians, who had joined neither side, suffered all the horrors of the civil war, and to them triumphs and defeats proved equally disastrous. Had Charles II. been true to his engagements, the presbyterians might have turned the tide of victory in his favour; but demanding as they did a constitutional monarchy and free parliament, they refused to join in arms with Irish papists and bloodthirsty cavaliers against the liberties of their country. Between the two contending factions, therefore, presbytery as an establishment failed, and at length fell; but even during the brief period of their régime, the presbyterians of Lancashire left their mark in the improved morality and religion of their native county.

When it is considered that the whole period during which presbytery held the ascendancy in England extended to no more than twenty years (1642-1662), some may think that, compared with the lifetime of the English church, such a brief interregnum hardly merits the importance attached to it in these pages. But it would be a narrow view to suppose that the issues of that event were confined to the period, or to the men who figured in it. In the world-wide plans of Providence, that section of our history may be seen, on taking a retrospective view of it, teem-

ing with far-reaching consequences. During the Commonwealth, England had acquired, under the arms of Cromwell and the valour of Blake, a superiority which gained her more respect than she had enjoyed many years before or afterwards among the nations of Europe. During this brief interval, the noble efforts of the Protector in behalf of the ancient Waldensians had checked the popish designs of France and Savoy, who sought their ruin. At the same time, the victorious career of Gustavus Adolphus secured the liberties of Germany, threatened by the same popish powers. Without some such efficient check as that of the interregnum, it is hard to say what must have been the fate of protestantism and evangelical religion in England. And though the ejection of the presbyterians under the Stuarts blasted their prospects as a dominant church, there can be no doubt that the Commonwealth gave birth to that body of evangelical dissent, which not only laid the foundation of English nonconformity, but carried the seeds of truth to New England, to be since ripened into the luxuriant harvest of American presbyterianism. Thus Providence raised up a succession of champions, terminating in the Prince of Orange at the happy Revolution; and thus the church of the Commonwealth has counteracted, and may yet cure, the baneful results which have flowed from three long reigns of bigotry, profligacy, and superstition.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VI.

NOTE A.

MS. Records of the London Provincial Assembly.

This manuscript is entitled "The Records of the Provincial Assembly of London, begun by ordinance of Parliament, May 3, in the Convocation House, Paul's, London, 1647." The history of this volume is curious. From an inscription at the top of the first page it appears that it was "purchased by Joseph Hill, at the sale of the library of Dr Lazarus Seaman, in 1676, and gifted by him to his reverend brethren the presbyters of London" (*Reverendis fratribus Presbyteris Londoniensibus, hunc librum, quem ex bibliotheca Doctoris Seaman, A.D. 1676 obtinuit, D.D.C. Josephus Hill.*) Mr Joseph Hill was a well-known presbyterian minister. Having done some service to Charles II. when in Zealand, he was offered a bishopric, but refused it, and died minister of the English Church at Rotterdam, in 1707, aged eighty-three.

Among the last entries in the book is one to the effect that "the register book be taken into the scribe's custody," that is, Dr Seaman, whose autograph follows, and who had taken the book home when the assembly ceased to meet in Sion College. After his death in 1675, it was found in his private library, and purchased by Mr Hill at the sale of his books, which, by the way, produced £700, and was the first library that was sold by auction in England (Calamy's Account, p. 16, and Continuation, p. 17). So far we can trace the book to its rightful owners. Mr Smith had left it in 1676 to "his brother presbyters of London." Another inscription bears that one Thomas Granger presents the volume to the library of Sion College, "this 20th of September 1726." How this Thomas Granger came into possession of the book we are not informed. But the consequence is, that these records, which were bequeathed to the presbyterian ministers of London, are now kept in the archives of the episcopal library of Sion College, London.

Since investigating this MS., the author finds that it has attracted the attention of Dr Stoughton, who has given a very full and fair account of it in his "Ecclesiastical History—Church of the Commonwealth," pp. 175-179.

NOTE B.

Dr Anthony Tuckney and Richard Baxter on Subscription to the Confession.

Dr Anthony Tuckney, as we have seen, had a principal share in the compilation of the Westminster standards; but he was opposed to subscribing it as a term of ministerial communion. "For the matter of *imposing upon*," says he, "I am not guilty. In the assembly I gave my vote with others, that the Confession of Faith put out by authority should not be required to be either sworn or subscribed to—*our having been burnt in the hand in that kind before*; but [only] so as not to be publicly preached or written against. I heartily and humbly desire of God that we may so inwardly agree, or so outwardly not express our disagreement, that we may not give advantage to more sorts of men than one that watch for our halting" (Dr Tuckney's Letters between Dr Tuckney and Dr Whichcote, pp. 76, 77). As to imposing the Confession as a term of christian fellowship, the presbyterians say—"Our brethren (the independents) misinterpret our intentions; for we desire no more imposed on our people than they in that case do in theirs, namely, that they appear to us to be orthodox" (Papers for Accommodation with the Dissenting Brethren, 1648, p. 49).

In the ordinary copies of the Confession, there is prefixed an epistle to the reader by Dr Manton, wherein there are some sentences introduced from another divine. "Thereby hangs a tale." This "very learned and godly divine" was no other than the celebrated Richard Baxter, who had been solicited by the publisher of the Confession to send a recommendation of the book for the use of families. Baxter consented, but only on the condition that the whole of his recommendation should be inserted or none. To his no small displeasure he found, on the appearance of the book, that not only had his name been omitted, but the

following sentence, which, he says, was not pleasing to all, had been omitted : " I hope the assembly intended not all that long Confession and those Catechisms to be imposed as a test of christian communion, nor to disown all that scrupled every word in it. If they had, I could not have commended it for any such use, though it be useful for the instruction of families " (Sylvester's Life of Baxter, p. 122).

NOTE C.

The Manchester Classis, or Presbytery.

The following extracts from the " Minutes of the First Classis in the County Palatine of Lancaster, containing the Parishes of Manchester, Prestwick, Oaldham, Flixton, Eccles, and Ashton-under-Line," Cheetham Library, Manchester, may give some idea of the care taken to secure a properly qualified ministry :—

" The call of the people and the consent of the patron, where there is one," are held necessary to ordination. Candidates are to be examined " in logic, philosophy, ethics, physics, metaphysics, and Greek and Latin."

" Mr Scoales hath been examined in divinity, but neither in that nor in humane learning hath given any competent satisfaction. Was advised for the present to forbear preaching, and to apply himself diligently to his private studies." Proof was required that he had taken the national covenant. A thesis in Latin was next prescribed.

Expectants are occasionally requested to preach before the Classical Assembly.

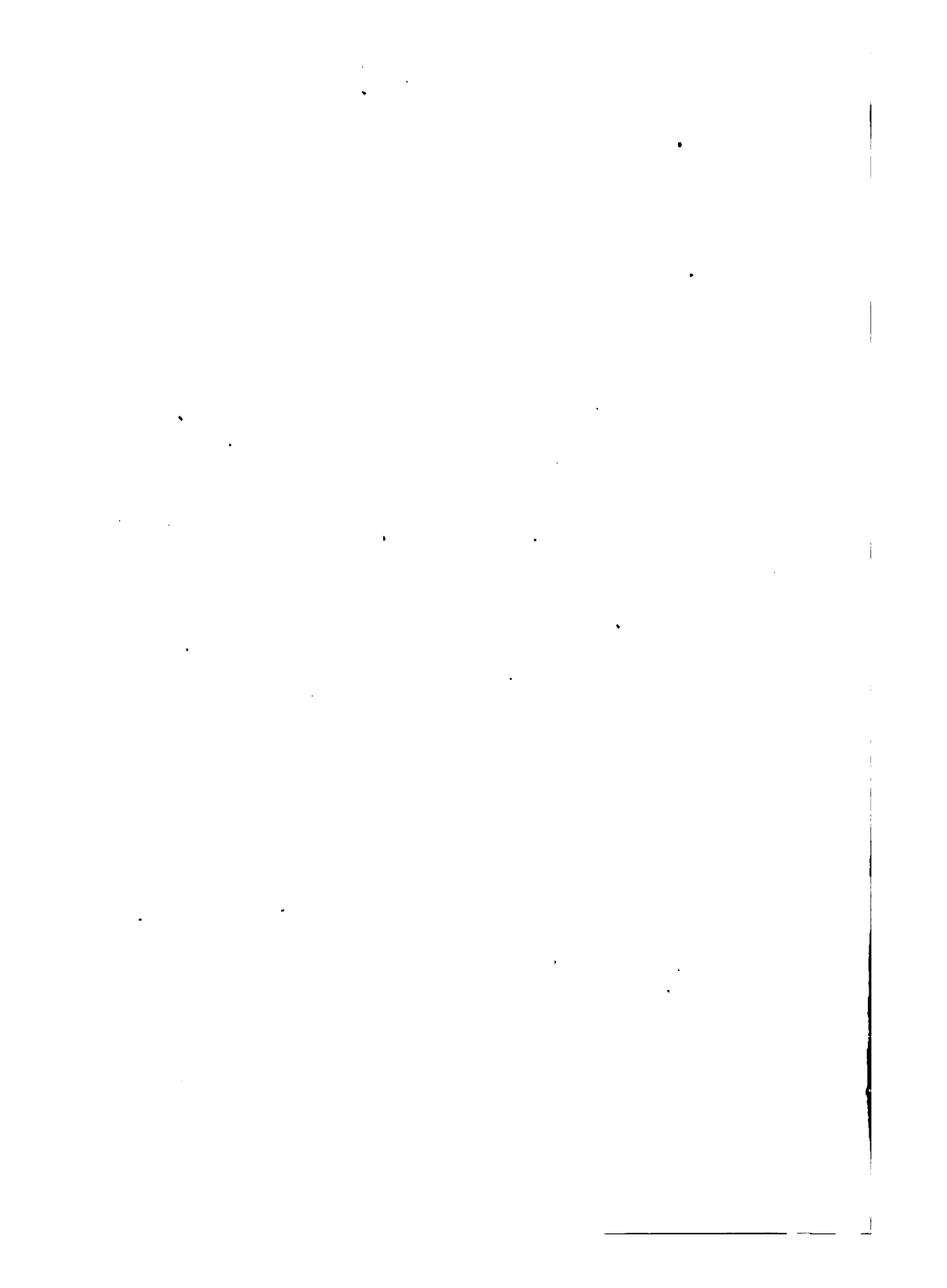
Lastly, the expectant had a written instrument given him, named a *Si quis*, with directions to affix it against the door of the church to which he had a call, being a notice that the presbytery would proceed, provided no exceptions were taken against him (what is in Scotland called " serving the edict").

" Mr Angier, senior, propounded the questions to the said Mr Baxter, who did before the congregation make public confession of his faith, and such declaration as was requisite in all other things propounded, according to the ordinance directing." The

candidate is then ordained "by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery."

The same forms frequently occur. The minutes commence February 16, 1646 (old style for 1647), and close August 15, 1700. Signed, "Hen. Finch, moderator; Thos. Dickenson, scribe."

Neither in this nor any other document of the period does it appear to have been the practice of the English presbyterians to exact from ministerial candidates a subscription or formula of assent to the Confession of Faith or other Westminster standards. In place of this was substituted the personal confession of the candidate. Further remarks on this subject will be found in connection with the Subscription Controversy in 1720, in our concluding chapter.



CHAPTER VII.

ENGLISH PRESBYTERY IN NONCONFORMITY.

A.D. 1662-1688.

"Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake."

Luke vi. 22.

"There stands the messenger of truth : there stands
The legate of the skies !—His theme divine,
His office sacred, his credentials clear—
By him the violated law speaks out
Its thunders ; and by him, in strains as sweet
As angels use, the gospel whispers peace.
He establishes the strong, restores the weak ;
And, armed himself in panoply complete
Of heavenly temper, trains by every rule
Of holy discipline, to glorious war,
The sacramental host of God's elect."

COWPER'S "*Task*."

CHAPTER VII

A. D. 1662-1688.

*English Presbytery in Nonconformity—The Ejection of 1662—
Ejected Ministers.*

AGAIN the scene changes. It is the 29th of May 1660. Cromwell has left the stage. He died on a tempestuous night, 3d September 1658, the anniversary of the battle of Dunbar and of his victory at Worcester; and the Commonwealth, of which he had been the soul and centre, vanished with himself. By another of those strange coincidences which people at that time were prone to consider supernatural, it is now at once the birthday of Charles II. and the day of his restoration to the throne of his ancestors. He is received with every demonstration of joy—"with a triumph," says Evelyn, "of above twenty thousand horse and foot; the ways strewed with flowers, the bells ringing, the streets hung with tapestry, fountains running with wine; lords and nobles clad in cloth of gold, silver, and velvet; trumpets, music, and myriads of people."* The dreary Lent of twenty years has been followed by a carnival of licentious

* Evelyn's Diary, i. 355.

revelry. The revulsion shows how many during the Commonwealth had concealed, under the mask of precisian piety, a selfish mind and an unsanctified heart; and proves that, even before the restoration, though fanaticism may be said to have been in the ascendant, genuine religion, as it appeared in the great bulk of the nation, was really at a low ebb.*

In the midst of this gay procession, and somewhat in contrast with it, may be observed, in sombre gowns and bands, twelve grave and learned divines. These are the presbyterian ministers of London, who, though they had been mainly instrumental in bringing about the Restoration, already begin to look with anxiety and alarm at the fury of the torrent by which they are carried along. Perhaps, even then, the warning words of Milton are ringing in their ears—"Woe be to you, presbyterians especially, if ever any of Charles's race recovers the English sceptre! Believe me, you shall pay all the reckoning."† Shrewd and sensible men, they were no politicians; and their conduct in the whole of this affair reads a sad lesson on the folly of christian ministers mixing themselves up with the shifting politics of the day. They have risked all the

* Writing to Baxter a year before the restoration, Howe observes—"Religion is lost out of England, further than as it can creep into corners." The influence which such a sad state of things must have had in inducing such men as Howe to accept of parochial charges in the church, has not been duly taken into account.

† Milton's Defence of the English People.

fortunes of their cause on the promises of one man, and that the very last man in Europe whose word could be trusted. Four of their number were deputed to wait upon Charles in Holland, and the prince had matters craftily arranged for their reception. They were shown into a room where, through a thin partition, they might overhear Charles at his devotions. With consummate hypocrisy, the royal voluptuary, imitating the language with which he had become familiar in Scotland, "thanked God that he was a covenanted king, and hoped the Lord would give him a humble, meek, and forgiving spirit." The good men were hoodwinked; and, in the interview which followed, could not think of bearing too hard on a prince so conscientious and tender-hearted.

The king's declaration before parliament, on his return, in which he said that, "to our great satisfaction and comfort, we found them persons full of affection to us, of zeal for the peace of the church and state, and by no means opposed to episcopacy or a liturgy," may serve to show that, if they erred at all, it was in being too ready to make concessions, and too unwilling to impose conditions. The truth is that they seem to have contemplated the possibility of uniting all parties under a "reduced episcopacy" and a "reformed liturgy." But they never doubted that the king's promise, issued from Breda, April 4, 1660, would soon become the law of the land:—"We do declare a liberty to tender consciences, and that

no man shall be disquieted or called in question for differences of opinion which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom."

How this royal promise was fulfilled, we shall presently see. It is needless, as it is painful, to dwell on the measures that followed. The government of the restoration, in concert with the old bishops, smarting under the memory of previous humiliations, and bent only on measures of reprisal and revenge, would accept no warning from the past, and were so impatient to restore church and liturgy exactly as they had stood before the odious "rebellion," that they could hardly wait to find a decent pretext for it. The mind sickens at the duplicity shown in the Savoy conference, where, under the pretence of satisfying the scruples of the puritan ministers, it soon appeared that the real object was to inveigle the presbyterian divines into a useless debate, and to weave a web for entangling their consciences. On this occasion the prelatical clergy asked, as if in surprise, for what purpose this conference had been called? For their part, they said, they saw no reason for change. They were willing that everything should remain exactly as it was before these troubles began; they had therefore nothing to propose, and wished only to know what these presbyterians had to object to the venerable liturgy and forms of the church of England. Discussion was needless; they might retire into another room and commit their proposals to writing. So,

formal papers passed between the parties, and syllogism was answered by syllogism. On being asked what they had to substitute for the Book of Common Prayer, Richard Baxter undertook the task, and retiring to a cottage near Hackney, he presented to them, in the course of a fortnight, his Reformed Liturgy, which was neither more nor less than a mosaic of scripture passages ingeniously pieced together. This substitution of the words of scripture for those of the suppliant was, of course, an unsatisfactory disposal of the old liturgy, which the present rulers were determined to retain without the slightest mutilation. The whole affair of the Savoy conference, as was to be expected, passed off without any result.

Equally disingenuous were the proceedings of the Convocation, in which the prelatists, now restored to their livings, carried it all their own way; not a single concession was made in favour of the puritans; not a single response was dropped from the litany; while the readings from the apocrypha were enlarged by the addition of other books, and a worthy doctor is said to have rushed out to the street, shouting in triumph, "We have carried it for Bel and the Dragon!" And not less discreditable was the policy of government. Startled at the result of the election of members of parliament for London in March 1661, when the city chose two presbyterians and two independents, they actually stole the private correspondence of the day from the post-office, lest the news should reach

the country; in proof of which the identical letters thus purloined may be seen to this day in the State Paper Office.* Meanwhile the agents of government were busy in propagating the most alarming rumours against the puritans, as secretly plotting the subversion of the throne, and contemplating a general insurrection. The oath of allegiance and supremacy was imposed on every member, and each was required, before taking his seat, to partake of the communion according to the order of the church of England. In these circumstances, the rulers and the bishops found a parliament, in 1662, quite subservient to their purpose. With indecent haste, and in the heat of party passion, on the 19th of May was passed the famous Act of Uniformity.†

By this statute it was enacted that all who had not received episcopal ordination should be re-ordained by bishops; that every minister should, on or before the 24th of August following, being the feast of St Bartholomew, “declare his unfeigned assent and consent to everything contained in the Book of Common Prayer,” on pain of being *ipso facto* deprived of his benefice. To perceive at a glance the sweeping character of this

* State Papers, Domestic Series—Intercepted Letters, Charles II., 1661-62; Pepys' Diary, March 20, 1661.

† Neal states that the bill was carried by the narrow majority of six votes, the *ayes* being 186, and the *noes* 180. But he seems to have laboured under some mistake, as no division appears, in the Journals of the Commons, to have taken place at the passing of the bill. See “Hallam's Constitutional Hist.,” ii. 338.

enactment, let it be borne in mind that it enforced the observance of the following points in the Prayer-book, all of them more or less obnoxious to the presbyterians:—1st, *The baptismal service*, in which the child, when baptized, is declared to be “regenerate,” “the child of God,” and “undoubtedly saved;” in which the sign of the cross is employed, and godfathers and godmothers substituted for the natural parents. 2d, *Kneeling at the Lord’s supper*, administered at an altar by a priest, thus pretending to convert that ordinance from a commemoration into a sacrifice, and the elements into the very body and blood of Christ. 3d, *The absolution of the dying*, in which the priest pronounces the forgiveness of the sick almost in the very terms of the popish service. 4th, *The burial service*, in which the priest commits the body of the most worthless and unprincipled to the ground “in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life.” 5th, *The apocrypha*, which, though containing senseless legends, was read in public worship, in common with holy scripture. When it is added, that every minister was bound to abjure the solemn league and covenant; to take the oath of canonical obedience, involving a recognition of all the orders of the English hierarchy; and, what was still more galling, to submit to re-ordination by the hands of a bishop, it can hardly be supposed that any honest presbyterian could submit to such incisive and extravagant conditions. Besides all this, they were required to surren-

der their faithful discipline, and compelled to admit to the most solemn ordinances of religion all and sundry who might apply for them, wholly irrespective of their christian character and life.

It is easy to see the drift of these enactments. The great body of the puritan ministers who then held livings in the church were no doubt presbyterians, and they were obviously the party mainly struck at. They could hardly be expected to stultify all their previous professions by renouncing their ordination and their solemn vows.* But among them were several who, in their private judgment, were congregationalists, and the object of the act was to make a clean sweep of all whose consciences could not submit to the enforced observance of everything in the Prayer-book. From previous conferences with them, the prelatists had ascertained how far they were willing to conform, and they now fixed on the exact points where they knew that the concessions of charity touched on the domain of conscience. "Every man," as Clarendon himself avows, "according to his passion, thought of adding somewhat to it, that might make it more grievous to somebody whom he did not love." "Now that we know their mind," said Sheldon, bishop of London, "we shall make them all knaves if they conform." And on some one expressing regret that

* "Sept. 30, 1662—The late outing of the presbyterian clergy, by their not renouncing the covenant, is the greatest piece of state now in discourse."—*Pepys' Diary*.

the door should have been made so strait, he is said to have replied, "It is no pity at all; if we had thought so many would have conformed, we would have made it much straiter."* Stringent as the provisions of the act were, means were taken to bring down the scourge as sharply as possible in its application. Three months only after the act was published were allowed for deliberation; and a petition for a few months' longer respite, to set their houses in order, was steruly refused. The term of St Bartholomew was fixed upon obviously to prevent the ministers from drawing any part of their salary for that year, and no provision was allowed to them in future; so that, without the means of paying their lawful debts or any prospect of support for their families, they would be driven out bare, roofless, and shiftless, upon the wide world.

The fatal 24th of August drew nigh, the blackest day in the calendar of the reformed church, being the anniversary of the Bartholomew massacre of the Huguenots of France in the preceding century, which occurred that year, as it did in 1662, on a Sabbath. Intense was the anxiety to know how the nonconformists would act. To the astonishment of all, to the admiration of the few capable of appreciating the sacrifice, before that day arrived, without any physical compulsion, without concert or co-operation, upwards of TWO THOUSAND ministers of Christ, rather

* Clarendon's Life, i. 557.

than submit to the terms imposed, voluntarily forsook their churches, parsonages, and livings, casting themselves with their destitute families on the providence of Heaven.*

Nothing is more remarkable in the story of this ejection than the quietness with which it was effected. The government indeed pretended to entertain some apprehensions of an *emeute*, and actually had the leading thoroughfares of London strongly guarded to prevent disturbances. But all such precautions were superfluous. The dissatisfaction in the public mind was widely spread and strongly felt; in one or two churches some of the common people, amused or annoyed at the novel and unwonted spectacle of surplice and service-book, hooted at the officiating clergy; † but the sorrow of good men lay too deep to vent itself in stormy ebullition. Nor did the ministers avail themselves of the opportunity to excite the angry feelings of their flocks; on the con-

* Great pains were taken at the time to conceal the numbers of the ejected ministers. It was industriously circulated in the unprincipled newspapers of the day that only one here and there had refused subscription (*Mercurius Publicus and Parliamentary Intelligencer*, from August 14 to August 21, 1662); and attempts have often been since made to diminish the amount; but the calculations of the industrious Calamy have been fully verified by subsequent investigations, which show that the ejected must have considerably exceeded two thousand. (See "Preface to Second Edition of Calamy's Account," ii. 19.)

† "At Westminster saw the bishops all in their habits; but Lord! at their going out, how people did most of them look upon them as *strange creatures*, and few with any kind of love or respect."—*Pepys' Diary*, October 4, 1660.

trary, their "farewell sermons," several of which were published, are remarkably free from any allusions to the melancholy circumstances under which they were delivered. Samuel Pepys, who records in his diary that he went to hear Dr Bates' farewell sermons at St Dunstan, on the Sabbath preceding St Bartholomew, when a great crowd was assembled, informs us that in the morning "he made a very good sermon, and very little reflections in it to anything of the times. In the afternoon Dr Bates' pursued his text again very well, only at the conclusion he told us after this manner:—'I do believe many of you do expect that I should say something to you in reference to the time, this being possibly the last time I may appear here. You know it is not my manner to speak anything in the pulpit that is extraneous to my text and business; yet this I shall say, that it is not my opinion, fashion, or humour, that keeps me from complying with what is required of us; but *something*, after much prayer, discourse, and study, yet remains unsatisfied, and commands me herein. Wherefore, if it is my unhappiness not to receive such an illumination as should direct me to do otherwise, I know no reason why men should not pardon me in this world, as I am confident that God will pardon me for it in the next.'"

A more inoffensive or less inflammatory address could not have been uttered. And yet there is a sublimity even in its softness. It is the calmness of conscious integrity, blended with the meekness of

christian humility. Mr Herring, who read the psalms and chapters on this occasion, after reading the 5th chapter of the Acts, which concludes by narrating that the apostles, when beaten and commanded not to speak in the name of Jesus, "departed from the council rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name, and daily in the temple and in every house they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ," simply said, "This is just the case of England at present. God he bids us to preach, and men bid us not to preach; and if we do we are to be imprisoned and further punished. All that I can say is, that I beg your prayers and the prayers of all good Christians for us." "This," says Pepys, "was all the exposition he made of the chapter, in these very words and no more." The melancholy details of the two thousand sad partings between ministers and people, in town and country, have never been fully revealed, and can only be conjectured from the few cases recorded.

The ejection, however, was but the beginning of sorrows to the nonconformists. These good men would cheerfully have submitted to be deprived of their position and livings in the establishment, had they been permitted peacefully to exercise their beloved ministry elsewhere. But first came the act to suppress what were invidiously called "seditious conventicles," according to which, if any persons upwards of sixteen years of age, should be present at

any assembly under colour and pretence of the exercise of religion in any other manner than according to the liturgy and practice of the church of England, where there were five persons or more besides those of the household, in such cases the offenders were to pay five shillings for the first offence, and ten for the second offence; while the preachers were to forfeit twenty pounds for the first, and forty pounds for the second offence; and a fine of twenty pounds was imposed on those who knowingly suffered any such conventicle to meet in their premises. Another, called the "Five-mile Act," prohibited the ministers from residing within five miles of the places from which they had been ejected. Subsequently, some of the severest acts of Elizabeth were revived, visiting all frequenters of conventicles with imprisonment and confiscation of goods. "And now," says Baxter, who witnessed and shared in the sufferings which he describes, "came in the great inundation of calamities which in many streams overwhelmed thousands of godly christians together with their pastors. As, for example, hundreds of able ministers, with their wives and children had neither house nor bread; for their former maintenance served them but for the time, and few of them laid up anything for the future. Then the people's poverty was so great that they were not able much to relieve their ministers. And the jealousy of the state and the malice of their enemies were so great, that people who were willing durst not

be known to give to their ejected pastors, lest it should be said that they maintained schism, or were making collections for some plot or insurrection. Those ministers that were unmarried did more easily bear their poverty; but it pierceth a man's heart to have children crying, and sickness come upon them for want of wholesome food, or by drinking water, and to have nothing to relieve them. I have heard but lately of a good man that was fain to spin, as women do, to get something towards his family's relief (which would be but little), and being melancholy and diseased, it was but part of the day that he was able to do that. Another, for a long time, had little but brown rye-bread and water for himself, his wife, and many children; and when his wife was about to be confined, was to be turned out of doors for not paying his house-rent. But yet," adds Baxter, "God did mercifully provide some supplies, so that few of them either perished, or were exposed to sordid, unseemly beggary."

And so these good men and true, driven from their homes, from their pulpits and parishes, from the people whom they loved and from the ministry in which they found their chief delight, went forth into the wilderness of the world for the sake of truth and a good conscience:—

*"Some natural tears they dropt, but wiped them soon;
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide."*

Attempts have been made, in various quarters and from different motives, to justify this iniquitous proceeding. Presbyterians have been usually spoken of as a political party, and represented as only suffering, in their turn, the hardships and disabilities which, when in the day of their power, they had inflicted on their opponents. Some bearing the presbyterian name may, without doubt, have mingled in the strifes of the day. But, in truth, they were from the first a religious party, and it will not be easy to point to a single ejected minister who had signalled himself as a political partisan. Both parties made use of them; but if they took part with the parliament, it was because parliament offered them religious reformation; if they afterwards took the side of monarchy, it was because Charles held out the prospect, not only of religious liberty but of deliverance from religious anarchy and confusion. To say that they were bloodthirsty in the prosecution of the regicides, is the language of mere faction;* and equally absurd is it to charge them with seditious designs against the crown. Their leaders were ministers of the gospel, unacquainted with the ways of the world, and too much occupied with their pastoral and ministerial labours to have either leisure or liking for worldly politics. If they are to be blamed, it is for their tame subserviency to rulers, and their tendency to yield too much to their encroach-

* Memoirs of Col. Hutchinson, p. 403.

ments over the church. It would be equally wide of the mark to suppose that they bore any resemblance to the wild sectaries and fanatics of the times. These, in fact, were the objects of their special aversion, and stood opposed to all their ideas of clerical dignity, church order, and official authority. In their very dress and outward deportment these two parties were antipodes. While the one party retained the close-cropped and ungainly appearance of the independents in the days of Cromwell, our presbyterian clergy developed into the full periwigs and flowing luxuriance of band and habit which usually characterised persons of their station after the restoration. Nothing indeed presents a more striking contrast than the costumes of the two periods, as seen in the portraits of the men that have been preserved.* They represent, almost without exception, fine-looking Englishmen, and types of manly beauty. One thing is plain—these men excelled in the gift of prayer. To question their sincerity in this duty, to confound their deep-toned piety with the simulated whine of hypocrisy or the unhuman ravings of fanaticism, would be doing as much injustice to the men as it would be disparaging to the Spirit of Promise by whom, if there is any truth in holy scripture, or such a thing as christian charity, we are bound to believe they were actuated. Like Paul and Silas in the prison, who “prayed and sang praises to God” at midnight, when there was no

* See Note A. to this chapter—Portraits of Nonconformists in Williams' Library.

light for reading prayers, and when their only pulpit was the stocks, in which their feet were made too fast to admit of ritual postures, there can be no doubt that these devout ministers could easily dispense with a liturgy. And as the prisoners heard the unwonted sounds, in like manner foes as well as friends were compelled to listen in reverence and wonder to "the prayer of faith." Bishop Richardson saw no incoherent rhapsody in the devotions of Thomas Watson, on the day before his ejection, when he followed him to the vestry, and begged for "a copy of his prayer," and was amazed to learn that "he had not penned his prayer, but spoken it out of the abundance of his heart."* And even the scoffing Pepys remained to pray with Dr Bates, much pleased, and admiring the way in which he linked the Lord's Prayer with his own,—“In whose comprehensive words we sum up all our imperfect desires, saying, Our Father, which art in heaven,” &c.† The proficiency which they attained in this exercise in public, only showed how well they had practised it in their secret communion with God.

There is another class with whom the presbyterians of this period must not be confounded—the political patriots of the day. The names of such men as John Milton and Algernon Sidney will be ever held in renown so long as Englishmen value national independence and civil liberty. But neither the poet

* Calamy's Account, p. 37.

† Pepys' Diary, ii. 17.

nor the philosopher were, properly speaking, religious men. Their religion was a species of philosophy, impregnated by the spirit of the gospel, and embracing many of its truths, but wholly independent of creeds, symbols, and churches.* Milton was a laical enthusiast, and wrote with equal bitterness against royalists and presbyterians. Sidney "seemed to be a christian," says Bishop Burnet, "but in a particular form of his own; he was against all public worship, and everything that looked like a church." † Milton mingled in the polemics of the day, flapping his wings like a sea-bird, and screaming in concert with the storm. Sidney stood aloof on the beach, contemplating the elemental war with the imperturbable dignity of an ancient Roman. We now advert to these distinguished patriots, not to pronounce a judgment on them, but merely to show the absurdity of supposing, as some seem to do, that the cavalier party had only to contend with "crop-eared fanatics and whiggish presbyterians." Never was there a greater mistake. The presbyterians of whom we write took no share in worldly politics; but there was a large party in the state who treated with greater contempt than they did the pompous pretensions of

* "The Prose Works of John Milton," by J. A. St John, ii. 367

† Burnet, however, is wrong in saying that Sidney was "an enemy to everything that looked like monarchy." He certainly approved of a mixture of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, as the best system of government, pleading only the supremacy of law (Sidney's Discourses concerning Government, pp. 138, 271).

churchmen and the puerilities of ritualistic snobbism. Milton and Sidney represented that numerous class which, caring little about churches or ordinances, prelates or presbyters, was mainly zealous in the cause of popular freedom and civil reform—the class of which chiefly, if not exclusively, modern history deigns to speak, and modern poetry delights to sing:—

“ Yours are Hampden's, Russell's glory,
Sidney's matchless shade is yours;
Martyrs in heroic story,
Worth a hundred Agincourts.”

But while the presbyterians of the seventeenth century were equally remote from the grimace of the Roundheads and the swagger of the Cavaliers, they deeply lamented the wild license of all classes which followed the Restoration, contrasting as it did so strangely with the enforced rigour of the Commonwealth. “ Hell seemed to have broke loose,” says a record of that period; “ a deluge of profaneness and irreligion flowed upon the whole land, and the secrets of many hearts and many cunning hypocrites were detected; for they wheeled about with the times, and returned not only to their ceremonies, but, what was worse, to their former debaucheries and impieties.” The example of a dissolute court was copied everywhere. Public and private virtue were alike treated with scorn. The theatre became a school of shameless vice; churches were deserted for the tavern and the gambling-house; and whereas the language of reli-

gion was before too often in people's mouths in matters of daily life, the slightest allusion to it now was only a signal for irreverent banter. A lady beseeches a nobleman to do his best for her husband's life, adding, "and then let it be as God will;" the smiling reply of the courtier was, "It is not now as God will, but as *we* will."* Some perhaps may wonder at the scrupulousness which led so many good men to sacrifice so much for what may appear minor matters of detail, and may be apt to sympathise with one of the parishioners of Nathaniel Heywood, who, when his minister said he would be glad to continue in his church if he could do so "with a safe conscience," replied, "Oh, sir! many a man now-a-days makes a *great gash* in his conscience; cannot you make a *little nick* in yours?"† But when it is considered that conformity, like the single drop of incense which the early christians were required to sprinkle on the heathen altar, was made a test, and understood by their persecutors to amount to a surrender of their faith, we will cease to wonder at the firmness and godly fear which, in the eyes of these worthy men, rendered compliance with a poor ceremony incompatible with the comfort of a good conscience.‡

And who are the men that have been thus so sum-

* Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson, p. 419.

† Palmer's Noncon. Mem., ii. 372.

‡ "Of what moment soever controversies may be," says Dr Manton, "if the things that are taken for errors are *imposed as a condition of communion*, a christian cannot join himself with them."

marily ejected? A band of more worthy and excellent ministers never occupied the pulpits of the church of England. Most of them men in the prime of life, between thirty and fifty years of age, of scholarly habits and liberal education;—with hardly one exception, men of faith and prayer, deeply imbued with the spirit of the gospel which they preached, and earnest workers in the ministry which they adorned. The author of the “Reformed Pastor” must be allowed to be a fair judge of ministerial qualifications, and he has said, “For all the faults that are now among us, I do not believe that ever England had as able and faithful a ministry since it was a nation as it hath at this day; and I fear that few nations on earth, if any, have the like. Sure I am, the change is so great within these twelve years, that it is one of the greatest joys that ever I had in the world to behold it. Oh, how many congregations are now plainly and frequently taught that lived then in great obscurity! How graciously hath God prospered the studies of many young men that were little children in the beginning of the late troubles, so that now they cloud the most of their seniors!”* “It raised a grievous cry over the nation,” writes Bishop Burnet, “for here were many men much valued, and distinguished by their abilities and zeal, now cast out ignominiously, reduced to great poverty,

* Baxter’s “Reformed Pastor,” Pract. Works, vol. iv. p. 364, &c., published in 1656, six years before the ejection.

and provoked by spiteful usage." "Worthy, learned, pious, orthodox divines," says the philosophic Locke, "who did not throw themselves out of service, but were forcibly ejected."

There stands, majestic and apostolic in mien as he is in nature, the image of his own "Living Temple," John Howe—just the man, from his look of dignity and tenderness, to have written "The Redeemer's Tears over Lost Souls." We see him as he looked when the bishop of Exeter asked him what hurt there was in his being twice ordained. "Hurt, sir! it hurts my understanding; it is an absurdity. Nothing can have two beginnings; I am sure I am a minister of Christ already. I cannot begin again to be a minister." A fine specimen of the independent of the olden times. And there, by his side, is that sturdy old presbyterian, Edmund Calamy; and there is Matthew Poole, with his learned "Synopsis;" Matthew Mead, with his "Almost Christian;" and Dr Lazarus Seaman, a Cambridge scholar, never seen without his Hebrew Bible, and whose sermons proved a perfect godsend to the young sprouts of prelacy when they pillaged his library; and the saintly Samuel Annesley, from whom John Wesley was descended, and deemed it enough to write on the tombstone of his grandmother, "She was the youngest daughter of Dr Annesley;" and there are Dr Thomas Manton, and Dr William Bates, *par nobile fratrum*, both of them distinguished for depth in theology and elocu-

tion in the pulpit—portly, princely-looking men, courted by the great, and to both of whom were proffered bishoprics; and there is Mr Joseph Alleine, whose sweet courteous temper could not save him from cruel imprisonments, which cut him off in his 35th year, and whose “Alarm to the Unconverted” has passed through more editions and done more good perhaps than any other tract of the same kind; and there is a goodly array of learned doctors, John Owen, Stephen Charnock, Henry Wilkinson, Edmund Stanton, Theophilus Gale, with many others it were too tedious to mention; and there is the genius of his age, Richard Baxter, but “fallen on evil days and evil tongues,” to whom we must assign a special niche in our Annals.

These are but specimens of the ejected; and all who love the gospel will admit that the sudden and simultaneous quenching of two thousand such lights, simply because they could not submit to certain rites of man’s devising, could not fail to be as disastrous to the church and nation of England as it was disgraceful to the instruments who effected it.

With few exceptions, the two thousand ejected ministers were presbyterians, who had subscribed the solemn league, and possessed livings in the church. Out of such a cloud of witnesses it becomes difficult to make a selection. In prosecuting our Annals we shall be chiefly guided by the general course of his-

tory and the characteristic features of the leading men of the period.*

Who has not heard of the terrible plague of London in 1665?—that visitation which swept away its thousands and filled the survivors with such alarm that the city was almost deserted. At this fearful crisis, when all business was suspended, when all sounds of gaiety were hushed, the deserted pulpits of the city were supplied by some of the “silenced” nonconformists, and among these none distinguished himself more than Mr Thomas Vincent, who stood firm to his post, ministering to the souls of the dying. “On these occasions,” says Defoe, “the people flocked to hear them, without distinction, not much inquiring who or what opinion they were of; the visitation having reconciled all parties, at least for a time.” Describing the scenes which he witnessed, in the work he afterwards published, “God’s Terrible Voice in the city,” Vincent informs us, that “we could behold the red crosses, and read in great letters on the doors of the infected, ‘*Lord, have mercy upon us!*’ and watchmen standing before

* Dr Edmund Calamy has done much to “preserve to posterity the memory of their names, characters, writings, and sufferings,” in his “Account of the Ministers, Lecturers, Masters and Fellows of Colleges, and Schoolmasters who were Ejected or Silenced” at this period. Calamy has arranged the persons according to the counties to which they belonged. This invaluable work, together with his “Continuation,” forms a sort of biographical dictionary, which may be consulted by such as are desirous to know more particularly of those ejected from certain localities.

them with halberts, and such a solitude about those places, and people passing by them so gingerly and with such fearful looks, as if they had been lined with enemies in ambush that waited to destroy them." The only return which Mr Vincent received for these self-denying services was, that when the plague had ceased, and when the fire which consumed the greater part of London had burned down some of the city churches, one of the clergy took violent possession of his chapel and turned him out of his pulpit till his own church was rebuilt. The good man pleasantly remarked, that "he was glad he had the New Testament and Psalms by heart, as he did not know but that those who had taken his pulpit and cushion might take his Bible too." The departure of this christian hero corresponded with the calm fortitude of his character. Seized with his fatal illness in 1678, in the 44th year of his age, the approach of death he welcomed with as much ardour as others shrink from it with alarm. His soul actually seems to have fluttered to be freed from the body, and to have beaten itself, like a bird, against the bars of its cage. "O noble death!" he cried, "welcome, welcome! hasten, hasten! Where is thy bow and arrows? Come, come, come! I am yet in the body on earth; but it is heaven, heaven, heaven, I would fain be at!" To the physicians he said, "Why do you come to keep me out of heaven? Dear Jesus, come and take me away; I have no business here; my

work is done, my glass is run, my strength is gone ; why should I stay behind? Oh, come! be as a roe upon the mountains of spices. How long shall I wait and cry, and be absent from Thee? Oh, come, and take me to Thyself, and give me possession of the happiness which is above—the vision of Thyself, perfect likeness to Thyself, full fruition of Thyself, without any interruption or conclusion. Oh, come Thou down to me, and take me up to Thee!” His last words were, “I am upheld in the arms of a Mediator!”

In connection with Vincent another person of a different type challenges our notice, Mr Samuel Shaw, author of the well-known “Welcome to the Plague.” Few were better qualified, from experience as well as genius and piety, to write upon that subject. In a rural village of Leicestershire, the fearful pestilence invaded his family through some relatives who had fled from London to escape from it. Barricaded in his own house, where not a soul durst come to his relief, he and his wife, after successively nursing each other under the distemper, had to bury two of their children, two of their visitors, and a servant, in their own garden. In Ashby de la Zouch he established a flourishing seminary, having no less than 160 boys under his charge, who came from all parts of the country, attracted by the fame of his learning; and in connection with this he afterwards, availing himself of the indulgence, set up a chapel, and opened it with a sermon on Acts xix. 19, “Disputing

daily in the school of one Tyrannus." Calamy, who knew him well, tells us that "his temper was affable, his conversation pleasant and facetious, his method of teaching winning and easy." That he was a genuine presbyterian appears from his refusing preferment, saying, when it was offered him if he would submit to be re-ordained, that "he would not tell a lie to God and man by declaring his presbyterian ordination invalid."

During the heat of the persecution, when it was much safer to be found drunk and disorderly in the street than sober and singing psalms at home, Mr Shaw would meet with a few friends for prayer, under the covert of night, in some quiet room, where, after making all about them impervious to sound or light, they would continue in their devotions till the morning dawn shining down the chimney warned them to take their departure. But if puritanism is another name for moroseness, Samuel Shaw was no puritan. The lively schoolmaster, short in stature and plain-looking, had a sparkling eye and a voluble tongue, and though none could be more serious in the pulpit, he was brimful of humour out of it. He made excellent scholars, and imbued them with sound religious principles; but he kept his boys in good spirits, joining in their youthful sports, and even composing interludes for their amusement at Christmas.*

* "ΡΟΙΚΛΟΡΗΘΗΣΙΣ; or, The Different Humours of Men, represented in an Interlude at a Country School, December 15, 1691." By Samuel Shaw.

The great fire of London, which took place soon after the plague, and which laid the greater part of the city in ruins, recalls another name, not to be passed without notice in these Annals, Edmund Calamy, grandfather of the famous Dr Calamy. This bold and independent man towers above his compeers like Saul among the people, superior to them all in learning, in ability, in force of character, and, above all, in sterling honesty. Large-minded and reasonable in his views of church-polity, there is good reason for believing that, presbyterian as he was in his judgment, had the Long Parliament not rushed precipitately on the abolition of episcopacy at the commencement of the wars, he would have introduced a gradual reform more in accordance with a wise expediency. As it was, his brethren raised him to the chair at almost all their meetings. He had a chief share in the two masterly treatises in defence of presbytery formerly mentioned, prepared by the provincial assembly. At the restoration he retained his moderation and integrity. Though offered a bishopric, he declined the preferment, "because he could not have it on the terms of the king's declaration at Breda." He was imprisoned for preaching after the Bartholomew Act, but as the prison-doors soon became as much crowded with carriages as the church-doors had been when he preached, and he held a levee in Newgate comprising many of the nobility and gentry, who deeply resented his treatment, they were glad to set him at

liberty. In Edmund Calamy we have a fine specimen of the manly and straightforward Englishman—a true patriot, and evincing high disdain of everything mean and mercenary. This is the man who could speak the word of God to kings, and not be ashamed—who had not scrupled to tell Cromwell to his face that if he attempted to assume the kingly power, “he would have nine in ten of the nation against him;” and who, preaching after the Restoration, when General Monk sat among the audience, on the subject of filthy lucre, could say, “Why is it called ‘filthy,’ but because it makes men do base and filthy things?” adding, as he tossed the handkerchief which he usually held in his hands towards the pew where the General sat, “Some men will betray three kingdoms for filthy lucre’s sake!” He lived to see London in ashes, and the sight broke his heart. He was driven through the ruins in a coach, and the spectacle of a city which he loved so well reduced to desolation, so deeply affected his patriotic spirit that he never recovered from the shock, but went home and died within a month.*

Meanwhile the persecution against the nonconformists waxed fiercer every day. The reigns of Charles and James are not marked indeed by any public executions of the nonconformists, for this good reason, that they could find no occasion against them in the peaceable behaviour of the presbyterians, who

* Calamy’s Account, p. 4.

kept aloof from political agitation, and from those state plots, for their alleged participation in which such patriots as Lord Russell and Algernon Sidney were brought to the scaffold. But the multitudes who suffered for nonconformity by being thrown into prison, where their lives were shortened by long and merciless confinement in pestilential cells, while their families were ruined by fines and confiscations, are almost beyond belief. "Revenge and fear seem to have been the unmixed passions that excited the church party."* It has been estimated, according to the lowest computation, that from the restoration of Charles II. to the first indulgence of James II. above fifteen thousand families had been ruined, and more than five thousand persons had died in prison, purely for conscience' sake, while the total number who *suffered* more or less for nonconformity has been estimated at sixty thousand.† Such general statements, however, convey no adequate idea of the amount of suffering, personal and domestic, endured at this period. The picture is broken up into so many fragments, is scattered over so many years, and embraces so many districts, that it is difficult to conceive of it as a whole. It is only by taking a single captive, like Sterne, and contemplating him in his dungeon,

* Hallam's *Constit. Hist.*, ii. 586.

† Sir James Mackintosh, "*Hist. of the Revolution*," pp. 167, 175. Bogue and Bennet, "*Hist. of Dissenters*," i. 106. Cotton Mather estimates the total number who *suffered* for nonconformity in England, from 1660 to 1688, at 60,000 (*Hist. of New England*, lib. iii. p. 4).

that we can arrive at any competent notion of the sufferings to which the presbyterians were subjected during these dark and despotic reigns. Let it also be borne in mind that these men were not, like common felons, inured to wretchedness, but gentlemen and scholars, accustomed to good society, to the comforts of home, and to the respect of their people.

Such was the character of Mr William Jenkyn, the son of a gentleman of landed property, a graduate of Cambridge, a finished scholar, who could write as well in Latin as in his native tongue, who drew crowds around him at Christ's Church and Blackfriars, London, and the author of "A Commentary on the Epistle of Jude." What could incense the government against Mr Jenkyn it is not easy to know; for he was distinguished for his devotion to the exiled family of the Stuarts, having been arrested by the parliament on the ground of treasonable correspondence with the friends of Charles, and only escaping the fate of Christopher Love at the earnest intercession of friends. But we fear that Mr Jenkyn fell a sacrifice to the wounded pride of the conforming clergy, whom he had, with his usual boldness, treated with little ceremony. In his funeral sermon on Dr Lazarus Seaman, whom he extols for his profound learning, he speaks of the prelatical incumbents in the following sarcastic style:—"What a company of uncatechised upstarts do we now behold! Oh, what poor shrubs are these young theologues to

this lofty cedar till death cut him down! These empty and unaccomplished predicants, on whom I would not have reflected (though losers may have leave to speak) if they did not reproach our persons, while they preach (to say no *worse*) our sermons.”* This discourse having been published, gave great offence, and involved the author in a lengthened controversy, which only ended by his being thrown into Newgate in 1685 for refusing to take the Oxford oath. Curiously enough, he owed his capture to his over-politeness. The officers of justice having come upon him at a devotional meeting with his brethren, all of the rest escaped but Mr Jenkyn, who was obstructed on the stair by a lady preceding him with a long train, on which he would not trample. In answer to his petition for relief, though backed by his physicians, who declared it was more than his life was worth to remain longer in such a close pestilential dungeon, the only answer received was that “Jenkyn shall be a prisoner as long as he lives.” The jailors were ordered to prohibit his visitors from praying with him; his daughter, on coming to receive his parting blessing, was refused admission. To the few friends who wept around his wretched straw pallet, he said, “The Lord sheds abroad his love in my heart so sensibly that I feel it, I have assurance of it. Why weep

* Funeral Sermon by William Jenkyn, late Minister of the Gospel at Christ's Church, London, 1675. His Commentary on Jude is marked by sententious gravity and good sense.

ye for me? Christ lives, and he is my friend, a friend born for adversity." Thus he died, January 19, 1685, verifying his own remark, "that a man may be as effectually murdered in Newgate as at Tyburn." The licentious monarch who had inflicted such a death on the servant of Christ was now approaching his own dissolution. Few who have once seen the striking picture representing the last night he spent on earth amidst his concubines and parasites will ever forget the look which death had stamped on his haggard face. On such a night shortly before, the conductor of the music asked his majesty what tune he should play, and was answered, "Play Jenkyn's Farewell." "Please your majesty," said a nobleman in waiting, "Jenkyn has got his liberty." "Ay!" cried the king, "who gave it him?" "A greater than your majesty," was the reply—"the King of kings." The countenance of Charles fell. In a few days Father Huddleston was secretly admitted by a side-door into the chamber of the dying king to administer to him extreme unction. The obsequies of the monarch, as they left the palace for Westminster, no doubt presented a more splendid sight; but how poor was the pageant when compared with the genuine grief and respect of the mourners who, in "whole scores of coaches," followed the remains of the presbyterian minister from his prison to the grave!

Take another example. Mr Obadiah Hughes was, when a student at Oxford, thrown into prison for no

other reason than because he was the son of **Mr George Hughes**, of Plymouth, one of "the excellent ones of the earth," a pattern of charity, moderation, and ministerial worth, who had succeeded in keeping all the decent episcopal clergy of Devon in their livings during the Commonwealth, and who was highly honoured and revered by them in return. The son was committed to the same prison with the father, in the island of St Nicholas, and they were not allowed to see each other. "Thank God," said the old christian hero, "I am not ashamed to live, nor afraid to die." The young man was only released to be again imprisoned in London; upon which John Howe, his brother-in-law, wrote him as follows:—"Nearer approaches to God must compensate for the unkindness of a surly world which grows more peevish as it grows older. It seems it was not enough to kill by one death; but it must have the renewed pleasure of putting us to further torture in dying once more."

Nothing is more characteristic of these persecutions than the unresisting meekness and patience of the sufferers. They exhibit in this respect a striking contrast to the covenanters, who were passing through a similar ordeal in Scotland. England witnessed nothing like the battles of Drumclog or Bothwell Bridge. Scottish presbyterians have always been more remarkable for fidelity to the persons of their sovereigns than for submission to their unconstitutional demands. The adherence of the nation to their

beloved presbytery not only gave them the advantage of combination against opposition, but in reality converted their opponents, even when supported by government, into the real nonconformists. It was otherwise in England, where presbytery was from the first in the minority, where the order had never been thoroughly carried out, and where, therefore, even if the spirit of the people had been congenial, there was no machinery for co-operation. But the English mind appears to be more plastic in yielding to the orders of the existing government, however unreasonable and oppressive. The consequence was that "hunted like the partridge on the mountains," the sight of the meanest bailiff was sufficient to scatter whole congregations. And yet the story of their sufferings, gloomy as it generally is in its sad monotony, is not wholly unrelieved by cases of romantic and marvellous adventure. In London and the larger towns the chapels were built in lanes and out-of-the-way corners, and furnished with secret doors and trap-stairs leading to the roofs of the adjoining houses to facilitate escape. In some parts of the country there still remain seats cut out of the hill-side, and a rude stone pulpit, where, after the passing of the Conventicle Act, the people would assemble for worship.* The ejected clergymen, driven from their rectories to make room for fox-hunting and dissipated successors, were glad

* As at Rivington, in Lancashire, at a place called Winter-Hill (Manchester Soc. Cont. Appendix).

to disguise themselves and serve as shepherds or labourers, and only were discovered by being overheard at their prayers behind hedges or in barns.

The memoirs of Oliver Heywood alone abound with striking incidents. Some of these, once read, retain ever after their hold on the memory; like those scenes in one's own early life, which have left either a scar that will not be effaced, or shed a gleam of joy never to be banished from the mind. Such is the story of his starving family, when the officers of justice had stripped him of all, down to the little family stock of meal, leaving him literally bare, "with no table to eat at or bed to lie on," and when he was obliged to send the servant to borrow five shillings from the merchant, and when poor Martha, trembling with shame, durst not ask the paltry sum, and was confounded when the man, putting five guineas into her hand, the gift of some friends, sends her home laden with provisions. And then the joy of the famishing children over the basket, and the gratitude of the pious father, who was praying all the while for the success of her mission, and who bursts out into "The Lord hath not forgotten to be gracious: they that seek him shall not want any good thing!" Or the story of the same good man, flying from his persecutors on that cold winter morning, till, jaded and hungry, at night he throws the reins on his horse's neck, and the animal turns aside to the lonely farmhouse, where Heywood begs a

little hay for his horse and leave to sit by the fireside. And then the converse that ensues with his honest host, in which Heywood, partly in jest, partly from fear, parries his inquiries about himself. "Oh, yes, there is a great noise about that man; some speak well, some very ill of him. For my own part, I can say little in his favour; but as I do not like to spread an ill report of any man, let us talk on some other subject." And at length, as the old farmer would talk of nobody else, and seems deeply interested in his safety, comes out the welcome discovery that the persecuted minister is now under his roof. And that night the homeless stranger is preaching in the farmhouse to a company of delighted neighbours, with all his wonted fire and affection.

But not the slightest resistance was made to the mandates of civil authority. Many of the ministers followed the example of Philip Henry, who, after his ejection, quietly walked with his family to the neighbouring chapel and joined in the service, rather than give offence to the ruling powers; though sometimes compelled to listen to the meagre and maundering ministrations of the incumbents, comforting themselves, as Philip would do, by quoting the words of Herbert —

"The worst speaks something good; if all want sense,
God takes the text, and preacheth patience."*

* The Life of Philip Henry, by his Son, edited by Sir John B. Williams.

Time was when the English people would not have tamely submitted to such tyranny, but the civil war had made the nation sick of strife, and anxious for peace on almost any terms. Besides, the sufferers were men of peace. "They felt deeply, but revenge was not cherished. They mourned, but did not recriminate; they wept and prayed, but not for vengeance. They professed to serve Him whose servants would not fight, because His kingdom was not of this world. They committed themselves to Him that judgeth righteously."* "We judged it," says one of them, "more agreeable to scripture example, a gospel spirit, and christian prudence." †

Even this quiet, mild, and patient behaviour did not always exempt them from insult. Mr Heywood, for example, on his ejection, thought he might at least attend worship in the church where he had formerly officiated. The churchwarden, however, no sooner saw him enter the door than he rushed upon him, and seizing him by the collar, pulled him out, exclaiming that the curate should not preach to an excommunicated man. Mr Heywood then stayed quietly at home, but the same zealous officer visited him there with a demand for four shillings as a fine for non-attendance at church. "But," said the servant, "if he go you will put him out of the church."

* Chapman's *Life and Times of Philip Henry*.

† *Diary of Oliver Heywood, Life by Slate*, i. 96; *Life of Oliver Heywood, and Sketches of his Times*, by Dr J. Fawcett; *Palmer's Noncon. Mem.*, iii. 435.

“Yes,” said the implacable myrmidon, “and so I will too; for the law must be executed, both to keep him away and to punish his absence!”* Thus, left without mutual concert or sympathy, or rather unwilling to avail themselves of the support of a combination which might be construed into conspiracy, these good men, in the amiable spirit of their religion, “took joyfully the spoiling of their goods,” and allowed themselves to be seized one after another, and led as sheep to the shambles. Charged with disloyalty, “Oh!” says one of them, “if our adversaries had a casement in our breasts, they might see loyalty and love there!” Branded with every epithet of scorn, they never resented or retaliated the insult. “No nicknames,” says Oliver Heywood, “shall follow the saints to heaven. *There they shall not be called puritans, fanatics, schismatics, or fools:—possibly, they may soon be honoured among men when dead: the memory of the just is blessed.*” In short, derided as precisians, even for the sufferings they underwent, they withstood the “world’s dread laugh” in the consciousness of Christian integrity. “Multitudes of faithful ministers,” says Flavel, “have been swept into their graves by ejections, banishments, imprisonments, and *heartbreaking silencings!*” Who can fail to sympathise with the reflections of good Matthew Henry, when he says of his father, “Surely this is a melancholy consideration, and lays great blame somewhere, that

* Life of Oliver Heywood, by Rev. Richard Slate, p. 106.

such a man as Mr Philip Henry, so well qualified with gifts and grace for ministerial work, and in the prime of his years for usefulness, so sound and orthodox, so humble and modest, so quiet and peaceful, so pious and blameless, should be thrust out of the vineyard as a useless servant, and laid aside as a broken vessel! This is a lamentable thing, especially since it was not his case alone, but the lot of so many hundreds of the same character."

This scene of mournful oppression may be fitly closed by adverting to the treatment of one who may be said to have stood at the head of the nonconformists—Richard Baxter. No one can look on that extraordinary countenance, with its sharp, shrewd, aquiline features, piercing eye and firm-set lips, and fail to see reflected in it the most accomplished polemic, preacher, and divine of his day. With the strongest sense of religion himself, no man could excite a more vivid sense of it in the thoughtless and the profligate. Bold as a lion, he discovered the same intrepidity when he reproved Cromwell and expostulated with Charles II. as when he preached to a congregation of mechanics. He is supposed to have preached more sermons, engaged in more controversies, and written more books, than any other nonconformist of his age. His writings consist of a hundred and forty-five different treatises. "This," as one observes, "is a very faint and imperfect sketch of Mr Baxter's character; men of his size are not to be

drawn in miniature. His portrait in full proportion is in his narrative of his Own Life and Times."* But even there he is a man entirely *per se*, and must be taken on his own terms. That he was a presbyterian is certain, but he will not allow himself to be so called; he was the champion of presbyterians, but he takes exception to the name.† He was no episcopalian, but he had a plan of his own, which he termed a "reduced episcopacy." He was no friend to the Book of Common Prayer, but he produced a "reformed liturgy" of his own. He was no sectarian, for in his pulpit at Kidderminster he encountered a whole battalion of them from Cromwell's army, and kept his ground against them during the livelong day till midnight; for, said he, "I knew that if I left the pulpit they would claim the victory." And yet he may be said to have formed a sect himself; for although, in the main, he was an evangelical divine, he wrote a "Catholic Theology" of his own, and he cut out a new path for himself, where none have exactly followed him, but which bears the name of Baxterianism. He would not subscribe thé covenant, but he fought for it manfully against all comers. And now, in his old age, he is brought before the infamous Jeffreys on a charge of sedition. His counsel pleaded in his behalf that

* Granger, Biog. Hist. of England, iii. 531.

† We are glad to see his title to be so called acknowledged by Mr Stoughton, in his Ecclesiastical Hist. of England, in a very different spirit from that of Mr Orme, and other writers.

he had always been moderate in his sentiments about bishops. "What!" exclaimed Jeffreys, who, as usual, had come to the bench intoxicated, "Baxter for bishops! that is a merry conceit indeed! Ay! this is your presbyterian cant—'truly called to be bishops'—that is himself and such rascals called to be bishops of Kidderminster and such-like places by snivelling, factious presbyterians; according to a learned author, 'And every parish shall maintain a tithe-pig metropolitan.' Richard, thou art an old knave; thou hast written books enough to load a cart, and every one is as full of sedition as an egg is full of meat. Hadst thou been whipt out of thy writing-trade forty years ago, it had been happy. He is as modest now as can be, but time was when no man was so ready at 'Bind your kings in chains, and your nobles in fetters of iron.' Gentlemen, for God's sake, don't let us be gulled twice in an age." The old divine is thrown into prison, fined 500 marks, to be kept in prison till the fine is paid, and to find security for his good behaviour for seven years. But Baxter was the same man before he went into prison, while he was in it, and when he came out of it. Time, that great scene-shifter, brings about the revolution; and now the imperious Jeffreys, whose very look was wont to inspire terror in all beholders, is in his turn a prisoner. As he is carried to the Tower, he is followed by a furious mob, howling and brandishing whips and halters in his face. The wretched

man, as abject in adversity as he had been ruthless in power, is crying out, "For the Lord's sake, keep them off!"* About the same time, in another part of the city, lay on his death-bed the prisoner whom he had so shamefully treated. But the peace of God hovered over the author of "The Saint's Everlasting Rest." "I shall rest from my labours," said he. "Yes," replied one of his friends, "and your works shall follow you." "No works," said Baxter, "I will leave out the *works*, if God grant me the *rest*." "How do you feel now?" asked another. "Almost well!" whispered Baxter, and expired.

There is hardly a county in England which cannot boast of having had a number of ejected ministers, and these all pious and faithful men, and many of them leaving behind them in their writings the fruit of their labours and fragrance of their memories. In no part of England were the presbyterians more numerous and better organised than in Devonshire. "There they kept their yearly provincial synod at Exeter in the month of May, in which all the ordained pastors had their place and session and power of suffrage. This synod was subdivided into several colloquies or classes; that of the South Hams reached from Asburton to Newton Bushell, from Newton Bushell to Totness, from Totness to Dartmouth, from Dartmouth to Kingsbridge, from Kings-

* Woolrych's Mem. of Jeffreys, p. 366. See also Macaulay's Hist. of England.

bridge to Modbury, including all the country parishes of these parts. These met once every quarter." Of these Devonshire presbyterians there has fortunately been preserved a series of full-length portraitures from the friendly pen of John Quick, the well-known author of the "Synodicon," who was intimate with them in early life, and who has furnished us with many pleasing recollections of them.* From him we learn that they were not more remarkable for their piety, learning, and laboriousness, than for genuine catholicity of spirit and desire for christian union. "To stem the impetuous torrent of errors, heresies, and blasphemies which then broke out," he says, "they used their utmost skill and best endeavour for a coalition with their prelatical and congregational brethren" (he refers to the period of the Commonwealth, when it would appear the prelatists, if not dismissed for scandal or incompetency, were allowed to exercise their ministry), "that so, by their united counsels and forces, they might prevent the desolation of the church and reformed religion, which was industriously attempted by disguised priests and Jesuits, who inspired the deluded sectaries." Of the sufferings of these good men after the ejection of 1662, Quick's manuscript gives some interesting glimpses.

As a specimen of these Devonshire worthies, we select one whose writings, remarkable for their sweet

* *Icones Sacrae Anglicanae*. For an account of this interesting manuscript, see Note B. to this Chapter.

unction and rich imagery, have gained for his name a world-wide reputation.* John Flavel was first settled at Depworth, but afterwards removed to Dartmouth in Devon. No man was more generally popular or more beloved by his people. When ejected from his charge in Dartmouth, they clung to him with such devotion that it was with great difficulty he could tear himself from their embraces. The whole congregation followed him out of the town, and at Townstall churchyard they took a mournful farewell of each other, "when the place might be truly called Bochim, for they were all in tears as if they had been at his funeral." In compliance with the "Five-mile Act," he removed to that distance from them; but he "dragged at each remove a lengthening chain," and he would occasionally steal back to minister to them in secret. "At such times," says our chronicler, "the word of God was precious; like stolen waters it was sweet, and like bread eaten in secret it was pleasant." On one of these occasions, at the earnest request of the people, he paid a visit to Exeter. On the morning of the Lord's day he was conducted to a wood about three miles distant from the city, near the highway between Crediton and Exeter. Thither a great multitude from the adjacent parishes assembled to hear him. After engaging for some time in prayer, Flavel began with an extempore address, adverting in affec-

* In Scotland Flavel was so popular that, till of late years, hardly a cottage could be found without a copy of his works in folio.

tionate and touching terms to the circumstances under which they met. He then commenced his sermon from Acts xvi. 30, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" He had not proceeded far in his discourse when the officers of justice came upon them; the meeting was dispersed, and the poor people fled in all directions; but some of Flavel's friends gathering round him, he escaped undetected. Undaunted by this, however, the greater portion of the audience rallied, and carried Flavel with them to the other side of the hill, where there was a larger wood, and there he preached to them without further disturbance, retiring after service to the house of a gentleman in the neighbourhood, who, though a perfect stranger to him, kindly received and entertained him.*

It may surprise those familiar with the simplicity and warmth of this writer's sermons to learn that they were uniformly delivered from written notes. He paid less attention to them in his latter days, but he would on no account enter the pulpit without them, and used to say that "he could not serve God with that which had cost him nought." Mr Flavel had a remarkable gift in prayer. One relates that, "fluent and copious as he was in prayer, in public

* Several of the people seized on this occasion were severely fined. One of them, a poor tanner, a widower with a family of ten children, said to a friend who was condoling with him over his loss, "I take joyfully the spoiling of my goods for the sake of my dear Lord Jesus, who loved me and died for me. He is not only worthy to receive my forty pounds, but life and all I have are all too little for him."

and private, I could very rarely observe him to use the same expression twice in that duty; and in the family I can aver it, for I lived in his house a full year,—he always excelled himself.” This estimable divine outlived the revolution. His whole heart was set upon effecting a union between the presbyterians and their congregational brethren. At length he had the satisfaction of seeing matters brought to what he thought was an amicable and conclusive arrangement, though, alas! it was soon broken off on the part of the congregationalists. A day of thanksgiving was appointed, and Flavel preached a sermon on the occasion, 21st June 1691. But it was his dying song. That same night he entered the realms of unbroken peace and undying love. “Come out of your graves, ye old puritans and self-denying ministers,” exclaims our author, “and shame this selfish, quarrelsome, and contentious generation. Oh, that there were a double portion of the healing spirit of those Elijahs whom I knew in my younger days!”*

Having already spoken at some length of the presbyterians of Lancashire, we may only select two of them as specimens of the ejected ministers in that county. The first worthy of notice is one whose name is equally familiar with that of Flavel to all lovers of puritan literature—Isaac Ambrose. A minister’s son, and born in 1604, he entered Oxford at the age of seventeen, and was settled first at Preston, and afterwards

* Quick’s *Icones Sacræ Anglicanæ* MS.

at Garstang, in Lancashire. Every one must regret that so little is known of the personal history of this gentle, loving, and praiseworthy pastor. The only remarkable fact recorded of him is, that once every year, in the month of May, it was his custom to retire to a little hut in a wood, and there, avoiding all human converse, to indulge in prayer and contemplation. In his private diary, a small portion of which has been preserved, is the following entry :—“ May 16.—I retired to a solitary and silent place to practise especially the secret duties of a christian. My ground is that of Cant. vii. 11, 12, ‘ Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field, &c., there will I give thee my loves.’ The Bridegroom of our souls (said Bernard) is bashful, and more frequently visits his bride in solitary places.” He would have complied with many of the requirements of uniformity, and was willing to read the liturgy, but scrupling at some of the ceremonies, he was ejected. A lover of nature, Isaac, like his namesake the patriarch, “ went out to meditate in the field at eventide.” Much of his time in his later years was thus spent, and he peacefully departed, 1664, at the age of sixty-one. His “ Looking to Jesus,” probably the fruit of these seasons of retreat, was long the favourite Sabbath-reading of our worthy ancestors.* With some points of resemblance, Isaac Ambrose

* The author well remembers when, next to the “ great ha’ Bible,” the works of Isaac Ambrose, in a portentous folio, was the most conspicuous volume in many of the cottages of Scotland.

differed from John Flavel. More judicious than Flavel, he had a finer imagination and a truer vein of poetry. "Flavel loved the garden and the corn-field; Ambrose the heath and forest. He loved to tell his people on Sunday morning what he had seen and felt in his lonely retreat. His 'Meditations' are fragrant with the sweet hawthorn of Widdicre Wood and the weeping birches of Darwen Water."*

The noblest champion of presbytery, and the life of the cause in Lancashire, was doubtless Henry Newcome of Manchester. The most eloquent of preachers, possessing a comely person, a winning address, and a fascinating voice, he was followed by crowds wherever he went. Mild and gentle in manners, moderate, charitable in his judgment, he was at the same time decided in his principles. While poor Heyrick yielded to the storm in 1662,† Newcome was inflexible. "Until death, Heyrick moved timidly and hesitatingly in his surplice; Newcome stood firm and erect in his Geneva cloak." Few scenes could be more touching than that which occurred on preaching his last sermon:—"Hugely they were affected, and likely to have spoiled me when I first went into the pulpit by the passion they showed at the sight of me;" and then his sitting

* Lancashire, by Dr Halley, ii. 203.

† "Poor old man! The best excuse that can be made for Heyrick is, that the infirmities of age had oppressed his spirit, and incapacitated him from acting with decision in so great an emergency."—*Halley's Lancashire*, ii. 168, 169.

next Sabbath, meek and mute, as a hearer in the church, while the people gazed partly in wonder at the surpliced curate doling out his platitudes, and partly in deep sorrow, to see that noble living organ silenced, the exquisite tones of which had once charmed and penetrated every heart. "If I had that man's tongue," said one, "I could not escape being proud of it." And yet, said John Howe, "there was in him an inartificial humility still drawing a veil over his other excellences—a stock of solid learning always ready for use, for ostentation never—conscience the most steady to itself, and the remotest from censoriousness of other men—eloquence without any labour of his own, not imitable by the greatest labour of another. Oh, the strange way he had of insinuating and winding himself into his hearers' bosoms! He was a burning and a shining light."

Altogether, upwards of sixty of the Lancashire ministers, many of them eminent, all of them worthy men, resigned their livings, leaving most of them scanty provision for their families, and not knowing what would befall them, nor where they would be allowed to exercise their ministry. The neighbouring counties of Cheshire, Staffordshire, Shropshire, &c., could all number some among the same list of confessors. In truth, there is hardly a county in England which cannot boast of having contributed its share to the martyrs of St Bartholomew's day.

Wales, north and south, York in all its Ridings, were prolific in furnishing ministerial victims. Volumes would be required to record little more than the names, the residences, the labours, and the sufferings of ejected English presbyterians. But as our plan in these "Annals" admits only of a selection, we shall close by adverting to the presbyterianism of Northumberland. From its close proximity to Scotland, the cause of presbytery has always found a congenial soil in that district. From the days of John Knox, who ministered for some time in Newcastle-on-Tyne and the vicinity; and who might at one time have been bishop of Newcastle,* had not the accession of "bloody Mary" compelled him to betake himself to the continent, there has been a succession of faithful ministers in these parts. At the commencement of the civil war, several of the well-known "worthies" of the Scottish church, among whom were James Guthrie, Blair, Rutherford, Douglas, Henderson, and others, are mentioned as having occasionally visited Newcastle. It was here that, in 1646, the celebrated meeting took place between Alexander Henderson and Charles I., with the view of discussing the question between presbytery and episcopacy. The object of Henderson was simply to let the King know, in a free, personal con-

* During the reign of Edward VI., it was proposed to divide the see of Durham, and the bishopric of Newcastle is said to have been designed for Knox.

ference, the grounds upon which he had been induced to change his sentiments on prelacy, under which system he had been brought up. But the policy of Charles, or rather that of the councillors to whom he had unhappily committed himself, was to avoid all personal conference on this topic, and he insisted that it should be conducted in the form of written papers. Those on the part of his majesty were, of course, the production of some of his prelatical divines; and in this, the most unsatisfactory of all modes of discussion, the controversy ended as it began. Thus the bishops, who were constantly hanging about his person, succeeded in preventing poor Charles from holding any confidential intercourse with the noblest, the most pious, learned, and eloquent man of his age.*

Newcastle, thereafter, appears to have been the headquarters of nonconforming presbytery. Here the old Northumberland *classis* was held; and here, after the Act of Uniformity, many "of the presbyterian judgment" still remained. In proof of this, we learn that the infamous Judge Jeffreys included

* In the same unworthy spirit, and not contented with having kept Charles I. from listening to any counsels save their own, one of these Anglican prelates published a forgery after his death, known as "Eikon Basilike, or the Portraiture of his Sacred Majesty," which has now been proved, beyond all question, to have been the production of Dr Gauden, bishop of Exeter, and afterwards of Worcester, who acknowledged it (Clarendon Papers), as "wholly my invention, making, and design." Laing's Scotland, iii. xxiv.; Brodie, Hist. of British Empire, iv. 219.

it in his bloody circuit, and was "huge witty upon all the prisoners, though it fretted him sadly he could not catch Ambrose Barnes, the presbyterian alderman of Newcastle," who stood high in his "black list." In default of other victims, he summoned twenty young men, whose crime was that they used to hold a weekly prayer-meeting. Fixing his glaring eyes upon one of them who seemed to be a mechanic, he asked, "Can you read, sirrah?" and on the clerk of court handing him a Latin Testament, the youth opened it at random and read, *Ne judicate, ne judicemini*. "Construe it, sirrah," cried the judge, in amazement. Immediately the young man solemnly pronounced the translation, "Judge not, lest ye be judged." Jeffreys was for a moment struck dumb, but recovered himself, and sent the young men to prison, where they remained a whole year, till the death of Charles II. is said to have saved their lives.*

Among the ejected ministers in Newcastle and the neighbourhood were Henry Leaver, of St John's; William Durant, of All Saints; Mr Samuel Hammond, vicar of Newcastle; Mr Thomas Weld, of St Mary's, Gateshead; Mr Ward, vicar of Hartburn; Mr Pell, rector of Great Stainton; Mr Thompson, rector of Bothal; Mr Henry Erskine, incumbent of Cornhill; Mr Thomas Trurant, vicar of Ovingham;

* Bennet's Memorial of the Reformation; Historical Memorials of Presbyterianism in Newcastle, pp. 50, 68.

Mr Humphrey Bell, vicar of Ponteland; Mr John Lomax, vicar of Wooler; and Mr Richard Gilpin, rector of Greystoke, in Cumberland.*

Henry Erskine, minister of Cornhill, was father of the celebrated Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine, the founders of the Scottish Secession Church. His wonderful privations, deliverances, and exertions belong rather to Scottish than to English history. Not so William Veitch, who may be said to have had no certain dwelling-place, and whose numerous wanderings we may notice. William was the youngest son in the large family of a Scottish minister, a sprightly youth, bold, fearless, rather fond of adventure, and not very scrupulous as to his mode of getting out of difficulties. William Veitch might perhaps have smiled in the face of anybody who called him a martyr; but no martyr was ever more hotly persecuted. Being involved with the rising of Pentland Hills, he fled to England, defying every attempt to apprehend him. He travelled over the most of England, from Coquetdale to London, having been at York, Hull, Beverley, Leeds, Nottingham, and many parts of Cheshire and Lancashire, preaching everywhere as he found opportunity, though at imminent risk, "it being," as he says, "a persecuting time." Returning to Newcastle about 1671, he

* Historical Memorials of Presbyterianism in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. By an Episcopalian (Thomas George Bell, Esq.), London, pp. 119. A little work written in an excellent spirit of christian liberality.

removes his wife and family from Edinburgh in creels to Stanton Hall, in the neighbourhood of Morpeth. Of his marvellous escapes there was no end. Thus he hears that the troopers have surrounded his house in search of him; but instead of flying, he borrows his shepherd's clothes, and coming up to one of the countrymen holding the horse of a dragoon, he salutes him with, "What think you of this night, Hughie? will it snow or not?" catches the reins, and when the trooper who has been searching for him mounts his steed, he holds the stirrups, with the herd's greasy bonnet under his arm. He is next thrown into prison at Morpeth, and conveyed to Scotland, where he narrowly escapes being brought to the scaffold. But no bolts could long confine William Veitch; he escapes, and constructs little prisons for himself, now in the "calf-house," and sometimes on cold nights "with a great covering of straw above him." Look at him again on the highest peak of Carter Fell. He is seated on a rock, from whence he can survey the troopers on either side. But beside him he has a hole excavated, just large enough to contain him, with a roof over it covered with sticks and mountain heather, and from this retreat he sallies out under night to hold religious services in various parts of the borders. And then in 1681 we find him in company with the Earl of Argyll, who has escaped from Edinburgh castle, and whom he conducts on horse-

back, under various disguises, safely to London. Many a wild adventure and wondrous escape had William Veitch to tell about, when settled down at last, after the Revolution, at the quiet fireside of his manse in Dumfries.*

Another character claims our notice, Mr Luke Ogle of Berwick. This good and learned man, though he declared "that the height of his ambition was to live quietly and peaceably among his own people," was too faithful to his trust to please the governor of Berwick, Lord Widdrington, who would not suffer him to preach a sermon without furiously charging him with treason, and treating him as if he had been the most dangerous incendiary in the kingdom. Four or five different times was he thrust into prison. It is surprising that after being so often incarcerated, mobbed, and maltreated, the quiet student of ecclesiastical history, the pleasing preacher, and the judicious divine should have survived the Revolution, and after refusing many inviting calls to Scotland, died peaceably in his much-loved charge at Berwick-upon-Tweed.†

* See Memoirs of Mr William Veitch and George Bryson, written by themselves. Edited by the late Dr M'Crie, pp. 45, 77, 147.
Calamy's Account, pp. 500-503.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VII.

NOTE A.

Portraits of Nonconformists in Williams' Library.

In the old library of Red-Cross Street, London, established by Dr Daniel Williams, there was (as there may still remain in the new premises) a fine collection of portraits, hung on the walls of the staircase, representing the leading nonconformist ministers during the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries. They afford a striking panoramic view of the contrast, in point of dress and even of physiognomy, between the men of the Commonwealth and of the Restoration, alluded to in the text. In a lower room there was a very remarkable picture, said to be the effigies of Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, though with what truth we cannot tell. The following slight reminiscences, referring chiefly to those noticed in the preceding narrative, selected from the author's notes, may afford some idea of this valuable collection :—

SAMUEL ANNESLEY, D.D.—Dark complexioned, sharp featured, and rather severe looking. His black wig is surmounted by a black skull-cap, and he wears short ruffles, stiff and pointed, "like quills upon the fretful porcupine." There is a solemn gravity in the whole features, and a deep intelligence in the eye.

WILLIAM BATES, D.D.—Finely formed features, with a gentlemanly look ; well-chiselled nose and compressed lips. He wears his natural hair, but long, and resting on his shoulders.

RICHARD BAXTER.—This is the most singular portrait in the collection. The most prominent feature is the nose, which is irregularly aquiline, and the bridge of which, rising abruptly from the forehead, descends as abruptly towards the mouth, while the elevated eyebrows, the widely-opened sparkling eyes, and the puckered lips, convey a *qui-vive* expression, strongly indicative of the promptitude and acuteness which distinguished the polemic and the divine. His attenuated frame tells of the ceaseless activity of his spirit.

THOMAS MANTON, D.D.—A large, noble-looking man, with an expression of mingled majesty and meekness. Clarendon told Richard Baxter that he would not have despaired of his com-

pliance "if he had been as fat as Manton." Wood describes him as "a round, plump, jolly man," and says, "he was like one fatted for the slaughter,—while the royalists resembled apostles, with their macerated bodies and countenances;" which Dr Harris calls "a butcherly comparison." Dr Manton became corpulent in advanced life from his sedentary habits, but certainly not from idleness, if we may judge from his works in five volumes folio. The whole contour of the man is in accordance with his character: "He disliked the forbidding rigours of some good people, and the rapturous pretensions of others; having found, from long observation, that the over-godly at one time would be under-godly at another."

JOHN HOWE.—A splendid countenance, full of grace and majesty. The face is smooth, and he wears a large full-bottomed wig, broad ruff, gown and bands.

INCREASE MATHER.—A fine pleasant expression, full of benevolence, lighted up by great intelligence. Appears in full canonicals, large peruke, gown and bands.

THOMAS JOLLIE, of whom Calamy says, "The particularities of his troubles would be endless—all which he endured with great patience to the last." The portrait presents a peculiar expression, the mouth being pursed up, and the eyes looking askance. He wears a black cap, with the white hair escaping, a gown and broad ruffs and bands. In his hand he holds a clasped bible, inscribed Gal. ii. 20.

OBADIAH HUGHES, of Plymouth and London, is represented with a pleasant, intelligent face, smoothly shaven, with long hair hanging over his shoulders; broad ruff and gown.

JOHN FLAVEL is represented as a good-looking young man, with long hair, a full round face, and neatly dressed, with broad band and gown.

OLIVER HEYWOOD presents a broad rubicund face, with a fine eye and firm mouth. His natural hair is white, and hangs in beautiful curls on his shoulders.

HENRY NEWCOME.—The finest countenance in the whole group, aristocratic, mild, and powerful in expression. Dress the same, but with a long narrow white tie hanging over the ruff and bands.

THOMAS YOUNG, D.D.—This learned man, who deserves to have been mentioned as one of the *Smectymnan* divines in the West-

minster Assembly (p. 155), was vicar of Stowmarket, and is better known as having been the tutor of John Milton, who ever held him in high esteem, and often visited him at his vicarage, where one of the mulberry trees which the poet planted still exists. A native of Scotland, and born at Luncarty in 1587, Young died at his vicarage in 1655. In some interesting "Biographical Notices" of Dr Young, printed for private circulation, by Mr David Laing, editor of "Baillie's Letters and Journals," there is a portrait of him, which, as one says, "possesses the solemn faded yellowness of a man given to much austere meditation; yet there is sufficient energy in the eye and mouth to show, as he is preaching in Geneva gown and bands, that he is a man who could write, speak, and think with great vigour."

Of the other two authors of *Smectymnus* not noticed in the "Annals," Mr Matthew Newcomen and Dr William Spurstow, who survived the ejection a few years, we have never seen any likeness. They were both remarkable men in their day. (Calamy's Account, pp. 294, 471.)

NOTE B.

Quick's Icones Anglicanæ MS.

This interesting manuscript is preserved, though in a very dilapidated and mouldering condition, in Dr Williams' library, formerly situate in Red-Cross Street, now in Queen Square, London. It is entitled, "Icones Sacræ Anglicanæ, or The Lives and Deaths of severalls Eminent English Divines, Ministers of the Gospel, Pastors of Churches, and Professors of Divinity in our own and foreign Universitys. A work never before extant. 2 Tim. 4, 5. Heb. 6, 12. Heb. 13, 7. Performed by John Quick, min^r of y^e Gospel." This is accompanied by other two volumes in folio, one of which is entitled "Icones Sacræ Gallicanæ, being a History of the Lives of five-and-thirty eminent French Divines, Pastors, and Professors in the Reformed Church and Universities of France." The three volumes are written out in a fair hand, and carefully prepared for the press. Prefixed are some poetical pieces, congratulating the author on the appearance of his work. They appear to have been written about the year 1691, but,

though the author's death did not take place till 1706, they were never published. Probably they came into the hands of Dr Daniel Williams, who preached his funeral sermon. Dr Calamy had access to these manuscripts, and has made ample use of them (see Calamy's Account, p. 230). Mr Quick was a descendant of the Huguenots, and hence the interest he took in the Reformed Church of France. He was the author of "Synodicon in Gallia Reformata, or a History of the French Reformed Synods." Settled first at Brixton, in Devon, he came to London, and continued to labour there for several years, chiefly in a meeting-house in Bartholomew Lane, near the ruins of St Bartholomew's Church, where, through a low gateway, still extant, the martyrs were led to the stake at Smithfield. Strange, that the name of that blessed apostle should be so mixed up with scenes of massacre, martyrdom, and ejection!

NOTE C.

The Scotch Church, London Wall.

The other Scotch church was in Swallow Street. Mr Robert Trail was the author of some highly esteemed sermons. He returned to London, after his imprisonment in the Bas Rock, and after preaching for some time at Cranbrook in Kent, he assisted Mr Nathanael Mather, in Lime Street, and after his death formed a congregation of his own. He died in May 1716. Robert Fleming, minister of London Wall, who died in 1716, was author of "The Rise and Fall of the Papacy," a work rendered famous by the fulfilment of its prophetic calculations in 1793 and 1848. Dr Cumming, who succeeded him, took an active share in the Arian controversy.

CHAPTER VIII.

ENGLISH PRESBYTERY AFTER THE REVOLUTION.

A.D. 1688-1872.

“ The veil is rent, rent too by priestly hands,
That hides divinity from mortal eyes ;
And all the mysteries to faith proposed,
Insulted and traduced, are cast aside.
They now are deemed the faithful, and are praised,
Who, constant only in rejecting Thee,
Deny thy Godhead with a martyr’s zeal.

Come then, and, added to Thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, as radiant as the rest,
Due to Thy last and most effectual work,
Thy word fulfilled—the conquest of a world.”

COWPER.

CHAPTER VIII.

A.D. 1688-1872.

English Presbytery since the Revolution—Eclipse of English Presbytery in the Last Century—Revival in the Present Day.

WITH the advent of William of Orange came peace and liberty, and once more English presbytery held up its head when the prince of a presbyterian land was advanced to the throne. Unlike James of Scotland, William was prepared to grant toleration to all sects; and he proposed at first that presbyterians and episcopalians should be comprehended under the roof of the same establishment. This, however, was prevented, mainly by jacobite machinations, though partly also by the reluctance of the presbyterians to merge themselves in a political church towards which the sad experience of twenty-six years had weakened their sympathies, and alienated their affections. So far as outward prosperity went, never were the position and prospects of presbyterianism brighter or more promising. In the heart of the metropolis its chapels were thickly planted, and they were filled with influential congregations, which, so long as the older ministers

survived, were favoured with a pure and vigorous dispensation of the gospel. It is to this period that a late historian refers, when, in one of his eloquent passages, he tells us that "the great majority of the divines of the established church might well envy the circumstances of the presbyterian pastor, when, by means of the voluntary contributions of his wealthy hearers, aldermen, West India merchants, Turkey merchants, &c., supplied him with every comfort, when the best broadcloth from Blackwell Hall, and the best poultry from Leadenhall market were frequently left at his door; and one of the great presbyterian rabbis, therefore, might well doubt whether, in a worldly view, he should be benefited by a comprehension."* Without supposing them to be influenced by such motives, for which there is no evidence, it is hard to say if, in a spiritual view, either party would have been benefited by such a comprehension, or if the nation would have been saved thereby from a century of inanity, laxity, and dissension. Certain it is, the presbyterians were more disposed at this era to amalgamate with their congregational brethren. Various efforts were made, about 1691, to accomplish such a junction, and if these failed, it was from no want of earnest desire on the part of the presbyterians, who were prepared to sacrifice for the sake of union some of their most distinguishing tenets. Writing to a friend abroad,

* Lord Macaulay's History of England.

Dr Calamy, when stating the views of the presbyterians and independents, says, that the differences between them were "very insignificant."* The knotty question of ruling elders, which had occupied the Westminster divines many a long sitting, they were now ready to compromise; and courts of review, though nominally to be kept up, were to be reduced to mere friendly meetings for advice, "the decisions of which must not be rejected without weighty reasons." These negotiations were soon broken off, and the two parties moved on in parallel lines without coming into collision, and with a smooth monotony which leaves the historian little striking or interesting to record.

Still, for several years after the Revolution, the flame of holy zeal, Christ-like love, and heavenly devotion, which had warmed the church under the winter of persecution, was, in many instances, kept alive. Among the thirty or forty presbyterian chapels in London, none was better frequented than that in Monkwell Street, Cripplegate, the oldest meeting-house in the city, occupied by Mr Thomas Doolittle, the last of the ejected ministers, who died in 1707. In several respects Mr Doolittle was a remarkable character. He was the author of an explication of the Assembly's Catechism, and excelled in catechising, an exercise to which he devoted the Sabbath afternoon. On

* Calamy's letter to a German divine, prefixed to his sermon at the ordination of Dr Chandler.

one of these occasions he asked if any of his hearers was prepared to answer the question, "What is effectual calling?" by changing the personal pronouns *us* and *our* into the singular number, *me* and *my*. A long silence ensued, none choosing to give the answer in a manner so directly expressive of personal assurance. At length a young man stood up, and with great modesty replied, "Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing *me* of *my* sin and misery, enlightening *my* mind in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing *my* will, he *did* persuade and enable me to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to *me* in the gospel." The delight of the minister, on hearing this answer, was only equalled by the emotion of the hearers, who were dissolved in tears. Another anecdote is told of him, which illustrates the free and easy manner of the preacher. When about to give out his text one day, he observed a young man who was making frantic efforts to escape from the pew into which, according to custom, he had been locked. Mr Doolittle paused, and in a serious tone, addressing an aged member in the gallery, said, "Brother, do you repent of having come to Christ?" "No, sir," replied the old man; "I only repent that I did not come to him sooner." Then, turning smartly towards the impatient prisoner in the pew, "Young man," he asked, "are you willing to come to Christ?" Staggered at the question, the youth remained silent, but the minister, waiting his reply,

and being urged by those near him, he said at last, "Yes, sir." "But *when?*" asked the minister. "Now, sir," he replied. "Then stay," said Mr Doolittle, "and hear the word of God, which you will find in my text: 'Behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.'" The most extraordinary part of the story remains to be told. It turned out that the anxiety of this young man to escape from the place of worship arose from fear of the displeasure of his father, a violent man, who had threatened to disinherit him if he ever entered a presbyterian chapel. But Mr Doolittle, on hearing this from the youth, promised to intercede for him, and the issue was that both father and son were savingly converted and added to the Church.

Another episode may be said to link the period of persecution with that of the Revolution. About the year 1672, Mr John Rogers, a descendant of the well-known martyr of that name under the reign of bloody Mary, and a faithful minister in Cumberland, was convicted before Sir Richard Cradock of having violated the Conventicle Act by preaching to a few people in his own house. While he and his hearers were waiting in the hall till Sir Richard made out their *mittimus*, the granddaughter of the justice, a mere child, was attracted by the appearance of the venerable minister, who was fond of children, and had taken her on his knee. "What are you doing here?" she inquired. Mr Rogers informed her that her

grandfather was about to send him and his friends to gaol. "To gaol!" she said, "and for what?" "Because I preached," replied the minister, "and these good people heard me." "But you shan't go to gaol," cried the impetuous child; and flying to the justice's room, and knocking at the door with head, fists, and feet, she demanded to know why they were sending the good old gentleman to prison? If they should do so, she would throw herself into the pond. As the wilful and spoiled girl had, on a former occasion, when thwarted, thrust a penknife into her arm, they were obliged to yield to her wishes. "There!" said Sir Richard, coming down-stairs, and tearing the *mittimus*, "you owe your release to that passionate child." Mr Rogers, on taking his leave, laid his hand on the head of the little girl, and lifting his eyes to heaven, solemnly said, "God bless you, my dear child! May the blessing of that God whose cause you have pleaded, though as yet you know him not, be upon you in life, at death, and to all eternity!"

The scene now changes to the Revolution, and to the mansion of a wealthy presbyterian lady, who is entertaining a company of clerical friends at her hospitable board. One of these was Mr Timothy Rogers, the son of the old Cumberland minister, who entertained them by repeating the story we have just given. "Is it possible," cried the hostess, "that you are the son of that good old man! Let me now tell you that I was 'that passionate child'

who received his blessing—a blessing I never forgot, and which heaven has answered.” She then told her subsequent history. She had spent a gay and thoughtless life, but had ultimately fallen into a melancholy frame of mind, during which she dreamed that she had found relief from a sermon on the text, “Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.” The dream had left a vivid impression of all the circumstances, but she long sought in vain for anything like them throughout the city, till one day she followed a crowd entering a chapel in Old Jewry where Mr John Shower officiated. In a moment the whole scene of the dream was realised. There was the audience, there the meeting-house, there the preacher. And now, she said to the lady who accompanied her, if this is the fulfilment of my dream, he will announce as his text Ps. cxvi. 7. The preacher gave out the very text; and it had pleased God, by means of the sermon then delivered, that her soul should “return unto its rest.” And thus, as marvellously as the old minister was relieved from prison through the intervention of that wayward child, was his parting blessing fulfilled towards her in after life.*

Last, though not least, among the worthies recorded in these pages, is the well-known commentator, Matthew Henry, the son of Philip Henry,

* Wilson's History of Dissenting Churches, ii. 322.

of Broadoak. He inherited all the piety, with more than the genius, of his excellent father. Born in the year of the ejection, 1662, he was brought up under the care of the best of parents, and evinced at an early period a decided predilection for the ministry. After passing the usual trials, he was ordained at Chester, according to the presbyterial mode then practised, after making a public profession of his faith before the presbytery and congregation. There he long laboured with great acceptance, till he was removed to London, and died at Nantwich in 1714. His chief work, and indeed the great work of his life, was his commentary on the Bible,—the most popular and practical, as it is the most savoury and substantial, of all Commentaries in our own or any other language. With no pretence to biblical learning, theological depth, or skilful exegesis, it still holds its place, even among divines distinguished for such acquirements, as a simple, spiritual, and edifying exposition of the sacred text, breathing throughout the very spirit of the wisdom that is from above, “first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.” * His old chapel, it is believed, is still extant in Chester, and a copy

* He lived only to carry forward his commentary a short way into the epistle to the Romans; the remainder was completed, with the aid of his notes, by a number of his brethren. Among Matthew Henry's other works may be mentioned, “A Method of Prayer,” a “Discourse on the Lord's Supper,” and a volume of “Sacred Songs.”

of his commentary long remained in it attached to the building; though, being now in the hands of unitarians, it is doubtful whether even this relic of evangelical presbytery has been allowed to perpetuate his memory.

A time of external peace, however, is not always most congenial to the growth of piety. The promise to the church, as well as to the christian, is that "they who sow in tears shall reap in joy." The sorrow is natural, but the joy is spiritual, and may be reaped even while the cheek is bathed in tears. The tribulation of the seventeenth century had yielded the "peaceful fruits of righteousness," even to the good men who were exercised thereby; but mere civil toleration and worldly comfort were not among these fruits, nor necessarily productive of them.

The eighteenth century ushered in a religious declension, which pervaded all the churches, not in England alone, but in Scotland, in Ireland, and on the continent. A spiritual blight, affecting alike the interests of truth and of religious life, for which various causes may be assigned, but which it is difficult to explain in any other way than by supposing the withdrawal of God's Spirit from the churches of the Reformation, swept over the whole of Europe. In England the change was soon apparent, though the process was gradual. The approach of doctrinal laxity was heralded by loud pœans in praise of what was termed christian charity. Pam-

phlets began to appear in defence of "the innocency of mental error," and in which the "fundamentals" of religion were reduced within narrow bounds, and nothing was to be heard of but "the light of nature, reason, and the fitness of things." Step by step the descent was made from the highest Arianism to the lowest Socinianism.

Arianism,—or the doctrine which, while it admits the pre-existence of the Son of God before his human birth, denies his proper deity or equality with the Father, and reduces him to the level of a creature, though the highest of all creatures and next to God,—has, in some cases, ascribed to him attributes so nearly resembling the divine, that, as in the case of Milton, its language, borrowed from scripture, may be mistaken for that of the orthodox faith. Locke and Newton may rather be called anti-trinitarians than Arians. They revolted from the subtle theological distinctions of the Nicæan Council, not because they absolutely denied the deity of the Son, but because they were unwilling to adopt phraseology which seemed in their eyes to militate against the unity of the divine Being; just as some object to the damnatory clauses of the Athanasian creed, because they appear to limit salvation to those only who are prepared to subscribe intelligently to the most abstruse distinctions between the persons in the Godhead. The old nonconformists never doubted the proper deity of the Son; but, though familiar

with the scholastic terms in which it had been expressed, they never dealt with these in speculation, nor dragged them into the pulpit. With them it was, as it is still with the "multitude of them that believe," the matter of christian experience rather than a mere article in their creed. They had seen with their eyes the invisible deity of the Father in the incarnate deity of the Son; they had looked upon the doctrine in the face of Jesus Christ; they had heard it in the story of his ineffable love; it may even be said that their hands had handled it, for they had felt that "the eternal God was their refuge, and underneath were the everlasting arms." It was quite another thing when the Godhead of the Son came to be canvassed as a metaphysical question, and when men, ceasing to worship, began to criticise the person of the Redeemer.

The heresy arose in the church of England, where the writings of William Whiston and those of Dr Samuel Clarke, in 1712, gave open battle to the supreme deity of our Lord, a doctrine hitherto held as incontrovertible, or only assailed in the guerilla warfare of the wildest sectaries. Among the nonconformists it did not appear till a few years later, and when it did so, it produced paroxysms of horror, and roused their utmost energies to expel the poison. "The early unitarians among the nonconformists," says Dr Halley, "were not presbyterians, as commonly supposed, but independents and baptists."

And the same author adds, with his usual candour, "the change in the theology of many nonconformists has been attributed, I think inconsiderately, to the influence of presbyterian rather than of independent ministers. The greatest offenders, or the greatest reformers (however the change may be regarded) were educated among the independents more frequently than among the presbyterians."* But to whomsoever its origin may be attributed, there can be no doubt that, in too many cases, the heresy soon found its way among the presbyterians. A striking illustration of the gradual declension of doctrine among them appears in the history of Mr Doolittle's chapel. That lively Calvinist was succeeded by Mr Wilcox, whose published sermons, orthodox but formal, feel as cold and hard as petrifications. Next followed a Baxterian preacher, who was succeeded by Dr Fordyce, the eloquent author of fashionable "Sermons to Young Women," and whose elocution Garrick would sometimes drop in to admire; and lastly came the avowed advocates of

* Halley's Lancashire, vol. ii. pp. 77, 380. "In London, in the early part of the last century, Nathaniel Lardner, Martin Tomkins, Moses Lowman, and Jeremiah Hunt, educated as independent ministers, and accepted as members of the independent board, were the chief supporters of the new theology. So on comparison of the Lancashire ministers belonging to the middle of the century, those educated in the independent academy of Northampton and Daventry, under Doddridge and Ashworth (the academy of Priestley and Belsham), were more decided and active in promoting the new theology than those who had been educated in the presbyterian academy under Dr Rotheram at Kendal."—Ib. p. 381.

Arianism, under whom the pews of the old puritan meeting-house far outnumbered the sitters.*

The first symptom of the entrance of Arianism among the presbyterians appeared in 1717, at Exeter, where Mr James Peirce and Mr Joseph Hallet were the ministers.† Strangely enough, the first thing that excited suspicions of Mr Peirce's orthodoxy was his omission of the doxology, which then, as it formerly had been the custom in the Scottish church, was generally sung after the psalm. Mr Peirce objected to sing anything but the inspired psalms of David; and thus the only relic of a formulary in use among the presbyterians became a test which discovered the sentiments which he had long concealed. At the entreaty of the people, the ministers of Devon, with a deputation of others from London, undertook next year to investigate the case. They proposed that all of them, for the satisfaction of the people, should subscribe

* Mr Richard Jones, a pupil of Dr Doddridge, who succeeded Thomas Watson and Stephen Charnock in the once prosperous Church in Crosby Square, closed his ministry and the doors of the chapel in a published sermon with the following sentence:—"Amidst all the instability of the world, as to both its civil and religious concerns, let me lead your thoughts forward to a higher and a better state, where all the connections that are founded in religion and virtue shall be more permanent, as well as more delightful!" Another, Mr Pickard, preaching the funeral sermon of a brother Arian in 1738, says, "His sentiments in religion were noble and free. There is no truth about which I am more clear than this,—that God will not condemn any man for mere error." (Wilson's "Dissenting Churches," ii. 73.)

† Mr Peirce was the author of a Vindication of dissenters, distinguished for its ability in answering the charges usually brought against the nonconformists.

the answer of the Shorter Catechism to the question, "How many persons are there in the Godhead?" or the first article of the church of England; but this the two suspected brethren steadily refused. They objected to sign any declaration of faith, except in the language of holy scripture, and they were thereupon dismissed from their charges. This led to the famous meeting of synod, composed of ministers in and about London, which was held in Salter's Hall, in 1719, where the question of subscription was hotly discussed, and ended in a formal breach between the two parties known as Subscribers and Non-subscribers.* This, again, led to an endless series of controversial pamphlets on both sides of the question.† That question related, not to the doctrine of Arianism, but simply to subscription. By the one party it was argued that the bible is the only and perfect rule of faith; that all summaries of christianity drawn up by wise and learned, though fallible men, can only be regarded "as helps to understand the mind of God in the scriptures;" and that all such human formularies were far from being eligible on their own account,

* Both parties claimed the victory, but they were nearly equally divided. "The number consisted on this occasion of 142, of whom 73 voted in favour of the position that subscription to the scriptures alone was sufficient, independent of any human formulary, which occasioned the lively expression of Sir Joseph Jekyll, 'The bible carried it by four.'"—*Unitarian Magazine for 1835*.

† Among these were "The Western Inquisition," and other pieces by Mr Peirce, in defence of the ejected ministers in Exeter; and, on the other hand, "Vindication of the Subscribing Ministers," and "Unreasonableness of the Charge of Imposition," by Dr Ridgeley.

“inasmuch as they tend to narrow the foundation of christianity, and to restrain that latitude of expression in which our great Legislator has seen fit to deliver his will to us.” They added that, without charging their brethren on the other side with a design which any of them disclaimed, yet “to them the subscription demanded appeared to have the nature of imposition, which,” they said, “had been the great engine of division among them, and had done unspeakable mischief to the christian church.” On the other hand, it was pleaded by the stricter party that the church had a right to require some such test of soundness in the faith, and that to refuse a subscription so simple and reasonable indicated a conscious antagonism to the truth of the gospel, or a laxity of belief which threatened to issue in a general defection.

The English presbyterians now began to experience, for the first time in their history, the danger and disadvantage of having no fixed standard of doctrine as a recognised test of ministerial soundness in the faith. Their prejudice against subscription to forms and imposition of tests, at first so natural in its origin, when these were forcibly enjoined by the state, now that free toleration was granted, developed into antipathy to the standards of their own church as tests of orthodoxy, though many had no objection to them in point of doctrine.* The consequences soon betrayed

* It may be noticed that several joined in the vote for non-subscription from no tendency to Arian views, but for the reasons just assigned.

their mistake. It was all very well so long as the church was under persecution. Men who were suffering for their adherence to truth were not likely to quarrel about their religious differences, and their people could desire no better guarantee for their fidelity than the fines and hardships to which their ministers were subjected for preaching to them the gospel which they loved. It was a very different thing when the advocates of error began to appear under the protection of law. It is generally seen that those who are conscious of having dropped some particular article of faith become suddenly enlightened on the unscripturalness of creeds and confessions in general. Nor do they always evince much desire to have these formularies taken under review, so as to bring them more into harmony with the existing beliefs of the church. The friends of Arianism, concealed or avowed, were among the foremost and most eloquent foes of all confessions. But even the orthodox presbyterians showed more anxiety to uphold their own ministerial liberty than to protect the christian people from ministerial laxity. They seem to have forgotten that the church was not made for the ministry, but the ministry for the church; and that the members of the church can have no security against the subtle approaches of error, without some well-understood "form of sound words," by subscribing which their public teachers render themselves amenable to the church duly represented in her councils—the main advan-

tage, after all, of a church-confession.* Above all, they seem to have lost sight of the principle upon which all the confessions of the reformed churches were compiled, and on which they are quite capable of being vindicated. They were never intended to supersede the authority of holy scripture. Unlike the Roman church, which transfers infallibility from the word of God to the word of a man, or of a body of men claiming to be the church, the protestant confessions were, as their name denotes, *confessions of faith* in the scriptures, as the only infallible rule of faith, and were expressly founded upon them. To substitute the scriptures for our confession, is plainly to invert the design of both. "We have believed, and therefore have we spoken." It was a strange mistake to confound our speaking to man in a confession of faith, with God's speaking to us in his word. Equally absurd was it to talk of confessions being "helps" to understand God's will in the scriptures; whereas they are meant as bonds of union among those already agreed in understanding the meaning of the scriptures, and prepared "with one mind and one mouth" to profess their faith in what they teach.

But the grand mistake to which we must trace the defection of so many of the English presbyterians, was their practical disuse of and departure from the

* We say the presbyterian ministers appear to have *forgotten* the distinction above made; for it is very clearly brought out in the "Jus Ministerii Evangelici," by the ministers of the London Provincial Assembly.

presbyterial government. It is too plain that, for some years before the Revolution, they had ceased to act as presbyterians. The regular meetings of presbyteries, the due subordination of church courts, and their authority as representative courts of appeal and review, had been virtually given up. In these circumstances, a confession of faith, even had it been subscribed, would have been of no value, either as a bond of mutual union among the ministers, or as a protection against error on the part of the people. The wildest and most unscriptural theories might be propounded from the pulpit as the preacher's confession of faith, while the church would remain perfectly powerless in its collective capacity to arrest their progress. There is reason to believe that, had any attempt of this kind been made, it would have been repudiated as downright persecution. Dr Calamy, having come to Scotland in 1709, attended a meeting of the general assembly during the trial of a minister for heresy. Being asked what he thought of the proceedings, he replied, "Well, now, in England we should think that this was the Inquisition revived."* The subsequent history of presbytery refutes this foolish idea of the discipline of Christ's house, and reveals too well the sad consequences of departing from it. In Scotland, where the confession has been sustained by the discipline, more or less faithfully administered, heresy has been silenced

* Calamy's Account of his own Life, vol. ii. p. 155.

or suppressed. The English church, in the absence of all church discipline, has become a patent theatre for the exhibition of all sorts of doctrinal varieties, and where subscription to the articles is a farce, at which all comers may play. In Ireland, these fences were no sooner removed than Arianism and a cold rationalism came in like a flood, and prevailed during the last century; until, only about forty years ago, on the raising of the old banner and password of the reformation, the presbyterian church in that country sprung to its feet, and now stands in its revived purity and strength, "an exceeding great army." Such, too, has been the experience of the Huguenot church of France, and the church of Calvin itself. It was strange indeed to see John Alphonsus Turretine, the son of Francis Turretine, whose name is associated with all that is most conservative in dogmatic Calvinism, taking the lead in the new theology; and no less ominous was the conjunction when his oration, which was delivered previous to the abolition of all subscription at Geneva, was translated, with a recommendatory preface, by Dr Samuel Chandler, the presbyterian minister of Old Jewry. The total absence of enthusiasm, even on the part of those who undertook the advocacy of the orthodox cause, is also characteristic of the period. Calamy tells us he kept neutral in the controversy at Salter's Hall; and how strange does it sound, even in our day, to be informed that Thomas Ridgeley, the author of the "Body

of Divinity," and Thomas Bradbury, the author of "The Mystery of Godliness," on the one side, with Moses Lowman and Nathaniel Lardner, the two great leaders of Unitarianism, on the other, "should have belonged to the same board, and sipped their rum and water together at the same tavern."* The *odium theologicum* has certainly its dark side, which is far from being either pleasant or edifying; but after all, we prefer the hot zeal of such men as Richard Heyrick of Manchester, emitting its fiery sparks against "the monstrous tenet of toleration," but flowing more from a warm heart than a bad temper, to the frigid indifference which had now assumed the shape of a mawkish and low-toned latitudinarianism; just as we prefer the genial heat of summer, with its occasional thunderstorms, to the chilling damps of winter, which induce us to draw closer together, not because we feel a special attraction to any in the crowd, but because we are all equally distant from the sun.

Poor indeed was the compensation made for the removal of the ancient landmarks of the church by the "Defences of the Trinity" which now came from the pens of Calamy, Waterland, and other advocates of orthodoxy. As we peruse these dreary, profitless, un-gospel-like treatises, they afford a sad proof of the cold scepticism and lifeless moralism of the times when such studies were demanded or could be relished.

* Halley's Lancashire, vol. ii. p. 382.

How different is the state of things in the present day, when few know anything of these past controversies, and fewer still would care to examine them ! And yet there never was a period when the great truths involved in the triune Godhead have been more generally embraced. The doctrine is now seen not merely written in detached texts, but as running through the whole contexture of scripture, like a thread of gold which cannot be taken out without tearing the whole web in pieces. It is seen gushing, like the heart-blood, through the whole scheme of human redemption. And a greater fallacy could not be entertained than to suppose, because Christians may not now be familiar with the obsolete terminology of the schools, that they have practically abandoned the great truths for which the orthodox were called in former times to contend. On the contrary, while the fact that there is so little controversial warfare proclaims the feebleness of the opposition, there can be no doubt that the mind of evangelical Christendom has settled down on the foundations which old Socinianism sought in vain to overthrow. Without the least acquaintance with the polemics of the question, the simplest christian, who has experienced the power of the gospel, can detect at once the Arian gloss or the Socinian sophism as it grates upon his ear : and after all the efforts which have been recently made to conceal the difference by the use of ambiguous and fair-sounding terms, he feels

that between the doctrine which unfolds and that which ignores the grace of salvation through Christ, there is a great gulf fixed—the gulf of infinity.

Of the presbyterians of the last century, therefore, these “Annals” have nothing to record. English presbytery, like every other form of earnest religion, then suffered a melancholy, if not a total, eclipse. “As to their ministry,” says Dr Halley, “the presbyterian ministers, as they appear to me, were, in the middle of the last century, generally good, quiet men, moving with the times, but moving slowly, doing their pastoral work steadily, but doing little else, living to be old in a sort of comfortable and respectable poverty, having little to fear or to expect from innovations, provided they came gradually, and did not rudely disturb their nonconformist traditions.”* This is a poor account of the men, but it applies not more truly to them than to the other churches around them. In two respects only must the difference have appeared. The presbyterian service, owing to the absence of outward ceremonial, demands, in order to redeem it from absolute bareness, some life and warmth in the pulpit; and it is one thing to preach orthodoxy, and another to preach the gospel. If there was a revival of evangelical religion in the middle of the last century, it was not because Wesley preached Arminianism, any more than because Whitefield preached Calvinism. “The gospel preached with the Holy

* Halley's Lancashire, vol. ii. p. 381.

Ghost sent down from heaven," produced the result, we verily believe, in spite of the one, and independent of the other. "Evangelical Arminianism" is an incongruous conjunction of former days, which seems fast hastening to dissolution. At the same time, though Calvinism, as a system, may not be deemed by some to be synonymous in all points with Evangelicalism, yet they cannot be held to be practically incompatible.

In addition to the lamentable effects of Arianism, the English presbyterians were destined to suffer in another way from the same indefiniteness, in the absence of a common confession. In many parts of the country endowments had been left by pious presbyterians, more or less ample, but still desirable, for the support of ordinances in the poorer districts of the country. These had now generally fallen into the hands of unitarians. An effort was made, of late years, to secure some of these for the use of orthodox presbyterians; and the case of Lady Hewley's Charity, as being left, in the year 1704, by a lady who was unquestionably an orthodox presbyterian (for there were then no others known than orthodox presbyterians), and left expressly by her "for the aid of poor and godly preachers of Christ's holy gospel," was selected as one most likely to secure a favourable judgment in law. The strongest opposition, however, was encountered from the unitarian body, who professed to be presbyterians without a presbytery, and, for the first

time in their history, claimed to be regarded as "poor and godly preachers of Christ's holy gospel." A long process of litigation followed, which issued in favour of the unitarian party, and in the enactment of "The Dissenters' Chapel Bill," in virtue of which, if no peculiar doctrines or formularies were specified in the trust deeds, it was provided, that the usage of the congregations in question for the preceding twenty-five years shall be held sufficient evidence of the purposes for which the property shall continue to be held.*

The Annals of English Presbytery seem to require some passing allusion to the present position and tendencies of English unitarians, who still nominally, on certain occasions, claim to be called presbyterians. In a volume of essays by Isaac Taylor, Esq., lately published, there is one on "Unitarianism in England." That essay was written about the year 1830, and embraces a period of thirty years prior to that date. The ingenious writer shows, from the admissions of the party itself through its leading organs,

* For this decision, it was understood that the cause of unitarianism was mainly indebted to the efforts of the late Lord Brougham. That distinguished orator and statesman boasted, we believe, of following, in ecclesiastical matters, the policy of his relative, Dr Robertson of Edinburgh, the celebrated historian, who was opposed to evangelical religion and to all popular rights and liberty in the Church—a policy which his descendant certainly followed out in Scotland as well as in England, and which exhibits a strange contrast to what some, however, may regard as a full compensation,—namely, his ardent zeal in behalf of popish endowments and emancipation !

that the system was in a miserably low and languishing condition even then; that its chapels, with the exception of a few in the larger towns, were almost deserted; and that perhaps one-half of the insignificant stipends paid to their ministers proceeded from the charity of preceding ages, and the perversion of a testamentary grant. "Fifteen shillings in every twenty must burn his palm as he takes them, if he be a man of keen sensibility. The thirty, sixty, hundred pounds per annum, which, if it be not the whole of his salary, is that on which his continuance in his place absolutely depends, had been destined by the puritanic donor for the maintenance of a doctrine which the man who receives it is always labouring to impugn. Sad position! hard service! The minister who stands in a pulpit under such conditions, might well, as he glances at the tablet dedicated to the memory of the illustrious dead, imagine that he hears 'the stone out of the wall' uttering the reproachable taunt, 'He that eateth of my bread hath lifted up his heel against me.'"

"It is a remarkable fact," adds the same writer, "that the system of doctrine of which we are speaking seems not to be susceptible of any middle state of prosperity. Unitarian chapels are either the three or four, or possibly the five, well-filled chapels in London, Birmingham, Liverpool; or they are the three or four hundred dungeons of desolation which

are found elsewhere.* By their own statements, ninety-eight unitarian chapels in every hundred are desolate." †

Since these sentences were penned, other thirty years have elapsed; and judging from the same authorities, it would appear that, while other dissenting communities have been keeping pace with the increase of population—while, in London alone, between 1840 and 1857, congregational chapels have increased from 88 to 171, nearly doubling their number, unitarianism has been sensibly on the decline. The "dungeons of desolation," of which Mr Taylor spoke in 1830, remain as desolate as ever, many of them being kept open by the aid of students, lay-preachers, or occasional visitations. Most of them are expiring from pure inanition. With the exception of our larger towns, in which all sorts of erratic bodies find their satellites, it is now becoming palpable, that were it not for the endowments of our Calvinistic forefathers, unitarianism would disappear from the land. The system is kept up as a species of legal fiction, long after it has ceased to be a reality.

* Mr Taylor seems to have overstated the number of Unitarian chapels, even as it then stood. From a list published in 1825, it appears that their chapels in England, Wales, and Scotland amounted to only 220 (*The Manchester Socinian Controversy*, Appendix, p. 120, London, 1825). The list appears somewhat reduced in "*Unitarianism Exhibited in its Actual Condition*," edited by Dr Beard, in 1846.

† *Logic in Theology, and other Essays*, by Isaac Taylor, pp. 96-106.

One party among them is trying to raise capital out of their historical antecedents. A pamphlet appeared lately, with the following title:—"Our English Presbyterian Forefathers: a sketch of their history and principles from the time of the Reformation to the Present Day. By Henry Solly, minister of the English Presbyterian Chapel, Lancaster." * This writer professes to show how naturally English presbyterianism has developed itself into unitarianism. From the commencement, he says, the system was "a vindication of the rights of the human soul—a principle of resistance to priestcraft and ecclesiastical tyranny." Unaware, apparently, that we owe to the English presbyterians our most learned and elaborate vindications of that form of government, Mr Solly maintains that at no period of their history were they much enamoured with presbytery; and he has made the discovery, which must be rather startling news to our congregational friends, that while the presbyterians were always addicted to religious freedom and open communion, the independents clung to "old creeds, tests, and systems of theology!" This historical theory exhibits what may be called "a ridiculous likeness" of the real case. It has been shown that the later degenerate sons of presbytery only became unitarians after they had, in spirit as well as form, ceased to be presbyterians. The idea that such men as Manton, Baxter, Bates,

* London, E. Whitfield, Strand, 1859.

Ambrose, Flavel, Henry, and a host of others—types of the presbyterian theology of their day—had adopted those loose notions of religious freedom which natively lead to Socinianism, is too monstrous to be entertained by any who are at all acquainted with their writings. It is, indeed, hardly possible to conceive a wider contrast than that between the reverential spirit of inquiry with which these men approached “the oracles of the living God,” and the spirit of unitarian freedom, according to which, as portrayed by one of themselves, “every man is becoming a high priest for himself, revering *the oracle within his own mind* in what it teaches him to believe as true.” In the one, we see the wistful gaze of the bending seraph as he “desires to look into these things;” the other suggests the bold stare of the arch-demon as he pointed to the forbidden tree.

Mr Solly denounces, in high indignation, the attempt made by the Synod of “the presbyterian church in England”—which he designates “an assembly of Scotchmen living in England”—to identify itself with the English presbyterians of past times, and thus “to seize the crown, that has been lying, not on the pillow, but the floor, while its rightful owner slept;”—and he concludes by expressing his apprehension that, unless his brethren take up the ground he indicates, that Church may ultimately “push them from their stools.” It might be asked where this “rightful owner of the crown” is to be found?

Unitarianism in England has no bishop, no synod, no church, on whose head the crown can be placed. "There is, for the most part, in our societies," says one of them, "an entire absence of internal organisation, except in so far as merely secular interests are concerned." The presbyterian church in England happens to be composed of representatives from all the three kingdoms. Most of its churches in the north of the island are composed of Englishmen who have remained faithful to the traditions of the past; and in the south a large body of its people are English. But even granting that they were merely "an assembly of Scotchmen living in England," they might maintain that, if they have taken up the crown of presbyterian doctrine and discipline which they found "lying on the floor"—that crown by which the old English presbyterians were distinguished—they alone are entitled to the name, the heritage, and the glorious memories of English presbytery.

A considerable number of the old English presbyterians who still adhered to the doctrine and discipline of the Westminster Assembly still remained in various parts of England. Of these, by far the greater portion occupied Northumberland, and other northern counties, many of them dating their existence from the Act of Uniformity in 1662, and they were at first supplied by the ejected ministers. When, about the middle of last century, Arianism, after developing into unitarianism, began to infect the ministers,

some of the congregations took the alarm, and in their title-deeds made provision that no person should be elected as minister among them "unless he shall subscribe an instrument or declaration that he believes the doctrines of the holy scriptures as summarily contained in the Westminster confession or declaration of faith." In several of these congregations a constant succession of orthodox and evangelical ministers has been kept up during the last century, and down to the present day.* The spiritual torpor which had settled down on the churches in England, as elsewhere, during last century, began, about the third decade of the present, to spring into new life; and the ancient presbyterians of England extended the right hand of fellowship to their Scottish brethren, who, though residing across the border, still adhered to the Westminster standards, and claimed ecclesiastical connection with their native country. Hence the constitution of the present presbyterian churches in England. Some of these are in fellowship with the United Presbyterian Church, others with the Established Church of Scotland. Another party, however, having sympathised with the Scottish church in her struggles for spiritual independence, formed itself, in 1844, into a church in sisterly communion with the Free Church of Scotland, but with an independent jurisdiction of its own, under

* See Historical Memorials of Presbyterianism in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. By Thomas G. Bell, Esq., p. 73, &c.

the denomination of "The Presbyterian Church in England." It deserves to be noticed, that no sooner did it assume this independent position, no sooner was the official ligature with Scotland severed, than it sprang into new life; it ceased to be regarded, as it had previously been, in the light of a colonial or foreign church; and, in conjunction with other churches tracing their constitution in common to the Westminster Assembly, it promises to become, in a few years, a worthy scion and genuine representative of the ancient Presbyterian Church of England.

Meanwhile, it may be stated, that "The Presbyterian Church in England" has its theological college in London; its home mission, which aims at the extension of the church by aiding in the planting of new congregations, and at supplementing the stipends of ministers in the weaker congregations; and its foreign mission, chiefly occupied with China. The home mission has succeeded in opening, within the last few years, upwards of seventeen new stations in the chief towns of England. Its China mission, the sphere of the labours of its late lamented missionary, William C. Burns, has been crowned with a special blessing and increasing success.*

But it is unnecessary to detain the reader with

* See an interesting little work entitled "Sketch of the History and Principles of the Presbyterian Church in England," from the pen of George F. Barbour, Esq., of Bonasheid, brother of the well-known munificent friend of that church, Robert Barbour, Esq. of Bolesworth Castle.

facts so recent, and already so well told in two of the most interesting biographies of the day.* The total number of presbyterian churches in England adhering to the Westminster standards now amounts to upwards of two hundred and fifty, being an increase of a hundred during the last twenty years. Of these the Presbyterian Church in England alone, which, when constituted in 1836, could number only thirty congregations, now numbers a hundred and thirty-three, so that, in thirty-five years, it has increased nearly fivefold.†

Should its numbers continue to augment at the same ratio, English presbytery may yet take its place as a power in the land. With its simple order, it possesses this advantage over a large and wealthy establishment, that it is in no danger of being upset by becoming top-heavy and unwieldy in its movements, and that it has a power of self-adjustment enabling it to meet the exigencies of the times, the changing fortunes of social position, and the influences of national predilection. At the same time, by virtue of its organisation, it avoids the opposite disadvantage of shooting up into a vast multitude of isolated saplings, tall but attenuated; it carries bulk

* See the "Life of James Hamilton, D.D., by the Rev. William Arnot, Edinburgh, 1870," and "Memoir of the Rev. William C. Burns, Missionary to China from the English Presbyterian Church, by the Rev. Islay Burns, D.D., Professor of Theology, Free Church College, Glasgow, 1870." London: James Nisbet & Co.

† See Note to this chapter—English Presbyterian Churches in London.

and strength with its breadth of root. And thus it bids fair, with the blessing of Heaven, to realise the growth of ancient Israel, "Thou hast prepared room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land." Everything, however, depends upon securing that blessing, and English presbyterianism would do well to take warning and instruction from her past annals. These plainly admonish her to "hold fast that which she hath, that no man take her crown." They loudly call upon her to avoid a loose, latitudinarian policy, which would sacrifice truth for a false peace, and a good conscience for fancied charity. On the other hand, they bid her beware of internal discord, of endless divisions, and of a weak stickling and striving for small points. For her a more glorious mission could hardly be prayed for or predicted, than to point out to a distracted church the golden mean between christian liberty and christian order,—to afford a large liberal resting-place for all that are "peaceable and faithful in Israel,"—and to present the spectacle, hitherto unwitnessed by the world, of a free, catholic, united, evangelical church, "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

NOTE TO CHAPTER VIII.

English Presbyterian Chapels in and about London.

List of chapels during last century, most of which were extinct in 1826 (from Wilson's "Antiquities") :—

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Wandsworth. | 18. Russel Court, Drury Lane. |
| 2. Crutched Friars, Poor Jewry. | 19. Peter Street, Soho. |
| 3. Crossby Square. | 20. Swallow Street. |
| 4. Little St Helen's. | 21. Princes Street, Westminster. |
| 5. Gravel Lane, Houndsditch. | 22. Maid Lane. |
| 6. Hand Alley, Bishopgate. | 23. Zoar Street. |
| 7. Salter's Hall. | 24. Unicorn Yard. |
| 8. Carter Lane. | 25. Parish Street, Horsleydown. |
| 9. New Broad St., Petty France. | 26. St Thomas, Southwark. |
| 10. Old Jewry. | 27. King John's Court, Bermondsey. |
| 11. Armourers' Hall, Coleman St. | 28. Jamaica Row, Rotherhithe. |
| 12. Silver Street. | 29. St Giles, Great Russell Street. |
| 13. Haberdashers' Hall. | 30. Bartholomew Close—Extinct. |
| 14. Jewin Street. | 31. Monkwell Street, do. |
| 15. Old Bailey. | 32. Essex Street, Strand. |
| 16. Salisbury Court. | 33. Meeting-house Court, Blackfriars. |
| 17. Bridges Street. | |

It is curious to remark the different character of the *localities* formerly occupied by these presbyterian chapels from those of more modern churches. The extinction of so many of the old chapels may no doubt be largely traced to the changes that have come over the city, by the removal of presbyterians, and church-goers in general, to the suburbs, chiefly in the west, south, and north. But, making all allowance for this, the above list affords a panoramic view of the extent to which presbyterianism once pervaded London. And it is a striking fact, that, while this suggests a melancholy retrospect of the state of things as they existed down to the present century, the late revival of the cause, which can hardly be carried farther back than thirty years, has issued in the erection of presbyterian chapels in other parts of the city, amounting in all to thirty-three,—exactly the same number as those which had become extinct during what we have called the eclipse of presbytery during the last century.

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